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The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church

Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives

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of the Whole Church

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The Faith and Order Advisory Group
of the Church of England

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Foreword

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Questions, both theological and practical, about ministry are preoccupying many churches today. Historic patterns and understandings are being widely reconsidered as social change and ecumenical dialogue alter the context in which Christian ministry is exercised. For Anglicans, this reconsideration has focused on two main areas: the nature and exercise of the episcopate (especially in dialogue with Lutheran and Methodist churches); and the diaconate and its relation to the presbyterate, on the one hand, and to 'lay ministries', on the other. It is the latter set of questions that has given rise to the present study document.

The history and character of the Church of England, attempting as it does to hold together different emphases and understandings of ministry, often make it difficult for us to handle these questions in a coherent and united way. The difficulty frequently surfaces (or lies just below the surface) in General Synod debates on ecumenical, liturgical or ministry-related matters. This report is offered as a resource for ongoing discussion as the Church of England responds to challenges to renew its ministry for the twenty-first century. It may however also be of interest to other churches asking themselves the same or similar questions. Churches with the historic threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons are realising that they need to revitalise their practice and understanding. Churches which have developed other patterns of ministry and oversight are now freer than in more polemical times to consider whether the historic forms may have permanent value. Both kinds of churches are

challenged by (and themselves challenge) emerging Christian communities who are either feeling their way towards or consciously resisting settled forms of ministry.

Three main factors seem to have prompted this Church-wide process of reflection and renewal.

The first factor is a renewed understanding of Christ's call to mission. Christians (even theologians) have not always sufficiently integrated their understandings of mission and of Church. It is however increasingly acknowledged that the mission of the Son and the Spirit creates the Church and that the Church only exists in relation to the *missio Dei*, whose instrument it is. The Church serves God's 'plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.' Because the Church only exists in relation to God's eternal purpose, every aspect of its life and work, its faith and order should point to, reveal, announce and serve 'the mystery of God's will.' The end of mission is God's own purpose through Christ 'to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.'

This reconciliation opens the worship of heaven to 'a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!"' This being the end, it follows that, as St Augustine commented, 'the praise of God should be the object of our meditation in this life, because in the life to come it will be forever the object of our rejoicing.' This eschatological hope is the ultimate point of Christian ministry, and has immediate and practical earthly consequences.

As a gift of God, the Church's ministry is oriented both towards the worship of heaven and its anticipation in this world. Both dimensions are essential to its nature. Liturgy and life are not two different things that Christians do, but the same reality seen from two perspectives. God's gift already shapes the Church's ministry for mission, but if this is reduced to an introspective this-worldly activity, even worship loses its heavenly reference and becomes at best a support for everyday life, while everyday life comes to be seen as lived within a closed system with no ultimate purpose. As Michael Ramsey so powerfully put it, in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (1936): 'The Christian does not share in the Liturgy in order to live aright; he lives aright in order to share in the Liturgy.'

The present age demands a full-blooded understanding of mission and a much more mission-focused approach than has been sometimes been the case. Ministry, ordained or not, is not simply about meeting the internal needs of a Christian community, but reaches out in witness, service and proclamation to the neighbourhood, to the nation and to the wider world. Of course the Church on earth does not stand apart from that world. As Paul puts it: 'the whole creation has been groaning in travail until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.' 'The glorious liberty of the children of God' is both an eschatological hope and a present challenge to confront in every way all that diminishes human dignity.

The second factor stimulating the renewal of ministry in our time has been ecumenical dialogue, interaction and partnership. The ecumenical movement has already given Christians and churches of different traditions a better awareness of the

strengths and weaknesses of each other's patterns of ministry and the theologies that underlie them. We can learn from each other's 'successes' and from each other's 'mistakes'. Approaches to ministry today are not only 'confessional' (in the sense of being rooted in the traditions and theological emphases of particular churches), but also ecumenical. Even where profound differences remain, these are increasingly recognised as a shared challenge rather than as merely a cause of separation. Those churches that believe their ministry to be an authentic manifestation of a ministry of the universal Church, the basic reality of which, even if not the detail, rests on the will of Christ and the work of his apostles, have a particular responsibility to attend to the potential implications of what they do in relation to ministry, as in other areas.

Some developments in biblical scholarship have been the third influence on the renewal of ministry. Although research into the New Testament and the early Church does not remove all uncertainty about the emergence of patterns of ministry in the early years of the Church, and can not prescribe how normative those are, some developments are well enough established to affect the thinking and policy making of the churches. One such area of research has been the re-appraisal of the Greek New Testament terminology related to our words 'deacon' and 'diaconate' (especially in the writings of St Paul and St Luke.) This work has been particularly associated with the name of Dr John N. Collins. His work has not so far been shown wanting in principle by other experts in the field, but, while his findings are being taken increasingly seriously by biblical scholars, their practical implications for patterns of ministry have yet to be received into the life of the churches.

One reason may lie in the fact that modern English Bibles often translate *diakonia* as 'service', rather than 'ministry', and *diakonos* as 'servant', rather than 'minister.' This reinforces the idea that the heart of the Church's task is 'humble service', so leading to concentration of the 'Church as servant' and to an emphasis on the deacon as assistant. While this has been a necessary corrective to ecclesiastical arrogance and 'imperialism', it has also tended to blunt the Church's proclamation in recent decades and distorted the understanding of ministry in general and of the diaconate in particular. Although 'servant' and 'minister' are both acceptable translations of the Greek, their different overtones in modern English make it important to clarify where emphasis lies in the New Testament (compare 'civil servant' and 'government minister').

Collins' argues that, in both classical and New Testament Greek, *diakon-* words generally refer to the carrying out of a mandated task on behalf of someone in authority. Sometimes that task may be of a rather menial nature (such as waiting at table), but at other times it may involve considerable responsibility. When the Apostle Paul speaks of the *diakonia* that he has received from God he is referring to his divine commission to bring the revelation of the gospel of Christ to all. This report accepts this interpretation and argues that, on the basis of New Testament usage, 'diaconal' language about the Church and the ministry is primarily 'missional'. This has profound implications for every aspect of Church life and very particularly for the ministry and ministries, ordained and lay, which express and serve this fundamental purpose of the Church, and particularly for the diaconate.

The Church of England has not been alone in not knowing quite what to make of the diaconate, although successive debates in the General Synod, going back thirty years, suggest some unique features to our own dilemma. Alongside the ordained ministry, the Church of England provides for authorised 'lay' ministries, namely Reader, Evangelist and Lay Worker. In addition to these canonical orders or offices, there has been an explosion of other ministries receiving a variety of forms of commission. While this growth has undoubtedly been a source of enrichment, it has also led to considerable confusion and even self-questioning on the part of clergy and authorised lay ministers, especially readers, as to the implications for their own ministry. As the scope of some of these ministries has grown and permitted many, though not all, of the functions of the diaconate, questions have inevitably been raised about the relationship of ordained and lay ministry. Renewed interest in the diaconate throughout the Church has, moreover, led to extensive ecumenical reappraisal. Some churches with a 'lay' diaconate have begun to move to an ordained diaconate. Other churches, like our own, are having to consider the implications of the promotion in some dioceses of the 'distinctive' or 'permanent' diaconate.

This report seeks to help by offering a fresh perspective on the diaconal calling of the whole Church, in the sense described, of being commissioned by God to convey the revelation of the gospel of Christ to the world.

This fundamental calling of the whole Church is served by specific ministries, ordained and lay. All alike are expressions of the one ministry of the Church. Authorised lay ministries are an indispensable sign of the Church as a single body, not

only having particular functions to perform, but also encouraging the exercise by all the baptised of the gifts and graces they have received through faith and baptism.

The place of the threefold ordained ministry within the people of God as a whole is well expressed in *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry (M12 & 13).*

(12) All members of the believing community, ordained and lay, are interrelated. On the one hand the community needs ordained ministers. Their presence reminds the community of the divine initiative, and of the dependence of the Church on Jesus Christ, who is the source of its mission and the foundation of its unity. They serve to build up the community in Christ and to strengthen its witness. In them the Church seeks an example of holiness and loving concern. On the other hand, the ordained ministry has no existence apart from the community. Ordained ministers can fulfil their calling only in and for the community. They cannot dispense with the recognition, the support and the encouragement of the community. (13) The chief responsibility of the ordained ministry is to assemble and build up the body of Christ by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, by celebrating the sacraments, and by guiding the life of the community in its worship, its mission and its caring ministry.

The Commentary on M13 adds: 'The ordained ministry fulfils these functions in a representative way, providing the focus for the unity of the life and witness of the community.'

All ministries, lay and ordained, find their place within the economy of God for the Church. Each should be affirmed and supported and made the most of. Each requires

a theological rationale drawn from Scripture and the tradition of the Church. Each must be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances and fresh challenges – in our case these challenges include the demand for mission initiatives that go beyond conventional parish structures, but above all the refreshment and re-energising of the whole Church in worship and mission.

When, in November 2001, the General Synod debated *For Such a Time as This: A Renewed Diaconate in the Church of England*, the report was referred back for further work, seeking to relate ordained and lay forms of ministry to each other. The present report arises from that request and is offered as a resource and contribution to the renewal of mission and ministry in the Church of Christ. I hope that it will prove a source of encouragement and insight to many, especially to all those – whether lay or ordained – who are called to serve God and the Church in various forms of ministry.

On behalf of the Faith and Order Advisory Group, I would like to express special thanks to the members of FOAG's working party and especially to the main drafters of the text that is now before us.

+John Cicestr:

Acknowledgements

The Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England is a constituted body of the Council for Christian Unity, with links to the House of Bishops. The working party that was initially responsible for the text consisted of Canon Dr Paula Gooder (Canon Theologian of Birmingham; Lecturer at the Queen's Foundation, Birmingham; Reader), the Revd Canon Professor Robert Hannaford (St Martin's College, Lancaster), the Revd Canon Vernon White (Principal of the Southern Theological Education and Training Course, Salisbury), the Revd Prebendary Dr Paul Avis (General Secretary of the Council for Christian Unity; convener of the working party) and Dr Martin Davie (Theological Secretary of the CCU; Theological Consultant to the House of Bishops; secretary of the working party).

The differences of style in the various sections of the report are due, not only to the nature of the material, but also to the need to deploy various areas of expertise. The hands at work are, in order, Paula Gooder, Martin Davie and Paul Avis.

The whole text in draft was considered by FOAG, by the House of Bishops Theological Group, and by the House as a whole, when many valuable suggestions were made. The Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church and the Theological Education for the Anglican Communion (TEAC) steering group of the Anglican Communion also offered comments.

In a wide-ranging consultation exercise, the following individuals offered substantial comments:

The Bishop of Carlisle, the Right Revd Graham Dow (Chairman of the Central Readers Board); the Bishop of Norwich, the Right Revd Graham James (Chairman of the Ministry Division); the Bishop of Rochester, the Right Revd Dr Michael Nazir-Ali; the Bishop of Beverley, the Right Revd Martyn Jarrett; the Secretary General, Mr William Fittall; the Director of Ministry, the Ven. Christopher Lowson, and Dr David Way; Dr Colin Podmore; Ms Joanna Cox (Board of Education); the Revd Canon Steve Croft (Director of Fresh Expressions); Canon Tim Dakin (Church Mission Society); Mrs Clare Amos; the Revd Professor Frances Young; and the Revd Canon Professor Anthony Thiselton.

In addition, Dr Gooder, the Bishop of Peterborough and Dr Avis held a day conference with Dr John N. Collins in York in July 2005.

Chapter 1

Introduction: the origin and aim of this study document

1 The background to the document

> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. (Matthew 28.19-20)

In obedience to the command of the risen Christ contained in these verses, and with confidence in the promise that they also contain, the task of the Church of England is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all who live in England. In order to perform this task, the Church of England, like all Churches with a similar mission, requires a ministry. The issue that is explored in this report is what kind of ministry the Church of England requires if it is carry out this missionary task effectively today.

There are several reasons why this has recently become a live issue in the Church of England.

- The first reason is that there is now a growing acceptance that the profound changes that have taken place in British society over the past few decades mean that the Church of England needs to make mission and evangelization its top priority and to develop new approaches to mission. This in turn raises the question of whether there need to be changes in the way that the Church of England envisages and structures its ministry.
- The second reason is that, while the traditional threefold order of bishops, priests and deacons remains unchanged as the bedrock of the Church of England's

ordained ministry, the forms of ministry in the Church of England have nonetheless seen significant changes in recent years. In addition to the fact that women are now ordained as deacons and priests, the overall number of those in ordained ministry has declined, the proportion of stipendiary ordained ministers has declined in relation to the proportion of ordained ministers who are self-supporting, and Ordained Local Ministry now constitutes a new way of exercising ordained ministry as part of a wider ministry team. Furthermore, while the number of ordained ministers has declined there has been a big growth in a variety of lay ministries authorized at the national, diocesan and parochial levels. These changes have tended to take place in a piecemeal fashion, rather than as the result of any overall strategy and the issue the Church of England is now faced with is how to make sense of the new patterns of ministry that have developed, both theologically and practically.

- The third reason is renewed study by biblical scholars of what the New Testament says about ministry. As we shall see in Chapter 1 of this report, scholars have challenged a number of preconceptions, with the Australian scholar John M. Collins, in particular, questioning whether the key Greek term translated 'ministry', *diakonia*, necessarily means humble service, as has often been assumed. Awareness of this work by biblical scholars has led people to ask whether we need to think afresh about ministry in order to reflect New Testament teaching and practice more faithfully.
- The fourth reason is ecumenical engagement. As the Church of England has engaged in dialogue with a variety of ecumenical partners it has been challenged to consider the rationale for its pattern of ministry and what it has to learn from the patterns of ministry to be found in other Churches.

- The fifth and final reason is the existence of a number of specific issues to do with ministry that have become the subject of debate. One such issue, which has been highlighted particularly, though by no means exclusively, by Evangelicals, is the issue of eucharistic presidency. The debate here is about whether it would be right for Canon B 12 to be amended to allow deacons, Readers and other lay ministers to be allowed to preside at Holy Communion. Another issue is whether it is right to see the diaconate as primarily a stepping stone to the priesthood, or whether it should be given greater emphasis as a distinctive form of ministry in its own right. A further issue is how the ministry of deacons should relate to that of Readers and other recognized lay ministers.

It is the debate about this last issue that has formed the immediate background to this current document, which has been produced by the Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England and is, in part, a response to the debate in General Synod in November 2001 on the earlier report on the diaconate *For Such a Time as This*.[1]

In the opening speech of the debate the chairman of the House of Bishops working party that produced that report, the then Bishop of Bristol, noted that it addressed the issue of the relationship between a renewed diaconate and other ministries in the Church of England:

> The working party was asked by the Synod to study the diaconate in the light of developing forms of ministry in the Church of England. We have taken this mandate very much to heart. Our report strongly affirms the ministry of laypeople, especially of Readers, evangelists and lay pastoral assistants. It envisages deacons offering support, training and co-ordination for these

> flourishing ministries. It deplores any suggestion that deacons might take the place of or undermine such ministries. It also takes account of the emergence of ministry teams, including lay and ordained, NSMs and OLMs, and suggests how a renewed diaconate would fit into developing patterns of collaborative ministry.[2]

In the subsequent debate it became clear, however, that many members of the General Synod, particularly those who were Readers, felt strongly that *For Such a Time as This* had not given enough attention to the relationship between the diaconate and authorized lay ministries and also that the Church of England should be giving support and encouragement to such ministries rather than to the development of a renewed diaconate.

At the end of the debate the following motion was passed:

> That this Synod, disappointed that the report (GS 1407) has not taken the opportunity to examine thoroughly the offices of Reader, Pastoral Assistant and Church Army Officer, request that the report is referred to the Ministry Division for further consideration.[3]

In 2002 the Bishops' Committee for Ministry decided that it did not want to take further action on this issue and the Faith and Order Advisory Group (FOAG) was asked to look at it instead. At its residential meeting in September 2002 FOAG set up a small working party to undertake study in this area in consultation with the then Director of the Ministry Division. The current report, though drafted by the working party, has benefited from discussion by the full FOAG and is offered to the Church of England by that body. FOAG is constituted by the Council for Christian Unity, but works to the House of Bishops, as well as to the Council. Its Chair and members are

appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and consists of ordained and lay specialists in the areas of ecumenical theology, ecclesiology, biblical studies, Christian ethics and philosophical theology, drawn mainly from the universities and the Church's institutions of theological education, but also including parish clergy, chaplains and Readers.

An earlier draft of this report was circulated confidentially to a range of 'interested parties' and others with responsibility for carrying forward the Church of England's policy with regard to ordained and lay ministries. A number of substantial responses were gratefully received. These have been carefully considered and the present text has been revised and reshaped in the light of these comments.

2 The thinking behind the document

In order to discuss authorized lay ministries in the Church of England and their relationship to the diaconate there has to be a prior understanding of what is meant by the term 'ministry' and the reasons for, and the nature of, the distinction between ordained and lay ministries within the Church. Furthermore, even a discussion of the nature of ministry as such has to be placed in the wider context of the activity of God in the world (the *missio dei*) and the mission of the Church as part of this divine activity.

Canon A 5 states:

> The doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures.

> In particular such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal.

This means that any study of the issues relating to ministry has to be grounded in Scripture. However, to avoid any superficial 'proof-texting' approach to the biblical witness, we have studied the biblical material relating to issues of ministry in some detail, drawing on modern biblical scholarship in general and the work of John N. Collins in particular. As we shall see later on in this report, the reason why particular attention has been paid to the work of Dr Collins is because his studies of the use of the term *diakonia* and its cognates in the New Testament have both challenged established ways of thinking about what the New Testament says about ministry and also suggested fruitful alternative ways of looking at this topic.

As Canon A 5 suggests, fundamental though Scripture is, it is not the sole resource that we have for thinking about these matters. Responsible consideration of them also involves exploring what the Christian tradition has to say about them, both in terms of the explicit teaching of the churches and of theologians from the early Fathers onwards and in terms of the implicit theology reflected in the ways in which ministry has been exercised in the Churches down the centuries.

It also follows that particular attention has to be given to the three 'historic formularies' specified in the Canon and to those ecumenical agreements such as, for instance, the ARCIC I report on Ministry and Ordination,[4] the common statement that proposed the Anglican–Methodist Covenant[5] and the World Council of Churches' report *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry*,[6] which the Church of England has accepted as

being compatible with these formularies. In addition, in order to be informed by a wider perspective, it is necessary to look at the writings of some contemporary theologians and contemporary theological texts relating to ministry.

Finally, consideration has to be given to the context in which ministry has to be carried out. As previously noted, changes in British society have raised new challenges for the mission of the Church of England. The working party has looked at how the Church of England has sought to respond to these changes in terms of what has become known as the mission-shaped church agenda, and how the witness of Scripture, the Anglican tradition and ecumenical theology about the nature of ministry relate to this new situation.

3 The topics addressed by the document

The working party has taken the Church of England's traditional threefold order of ordained ministry as a given for Anglican thinking about ministerial issues. It has also not looked at certain questions to do with sacramental theology and the ontology of ordained ministry such as the nature of the 'character' given in ordination (Canon c 1.2) .

It has, instead, focused on the following specific topics:

- What are the principles concerning ministry that we can learn from the New Testament and how can we apply these today?
- Is the traditional distinction between lay and ordained ministry a helpful one and, if it is, what is the distinction between the two?

- Are the existing division of functions between the various forms of ministry justified or do they need to be reconsidered?
- Given the continuing decline in the numbers of ordained ministers and particularly stipendiary ministers, how can ordained and lay ministries complement one another?
- What are the distinctions between diaconal ministry and nationally recognized lay ministries and do these distinctions justify their continued existence as separate forms of ministry?
- What is the relation between the forms of ministry needed in a Church based on the traditional parochial system and those required in a 'mixed economy' Church in which the parochial approach to ministry and mission exists alongside other approaches?

4 The structure of the document

In order to consider the issues just outlined the body of the text is divided into four more chapters.

- The next chapter looks at ministry in the New Testament.

It considers what we can learn from the New Testament both about the meaning of 'ministry' and about the various forms of ministry that existed in the earliest Christian churches. It begins by focusing on Collins' argument that *diakonia* should be understood in terms of responsible commissioned agency, rather than humble service, and asks how this more missiological interpretation should affect the way we read what the New Testament has to say about the nature and exercise of ministry.

It then goes on to examine briefly the development of ministry during the New Testament period and on into the early second century. It concludes by looking briefly at the hermeneutical issue of how we can move from a study of what the New Testament says about ministry to the development of patterns of ministry that are appropriate for today.

- The third chapter looks at the changing context for mission and ministry in the Church of England and in the wider world.

It begins by surveying the ways in which the Church of England's ministry has developed since the beginning of its history, focusing on the fact that while the historic threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons has remained central to the life of the Church of England, there have also been significant changes in the ways in which ministry is exercised in the Church of England, with self-supporting ordained ministry and various forms of authorized lay ministry becoming increasingly important during the twentieth century and the new concepts of ordained pioneer ministers and lay pioneer ministries emerging at the start of the twenty-first century.

Drawing on the work of both sociologists and theologians, this chapter then goes on to explore the changes that have taken place in British society in recent years, focusing on the challenges presented to the Church of England by changing patterns of social life and religious affiliation. Lastly, it examines what missiologists are telling us about how we should undertake mission in the light of these changes.

- The fourth chapter outlines a theology of mission and ministry, ordained and lay.

This chapter is an exercise in constructive theology that builds on the studies of the biblical material and the historical and contemporary context contained in the earlier chapters of the report and also draws on the teaching of the Christian tradition and a range of recent theological texts relating to the subject of ministry.

It starts by looking at the relation between ministry and mission and between the mission of God and the mission of the Church. It then goes on to look at the tasks of the Church in terms of the fulfilment of the mandate, broadly given in the Great Commission of Matthew 28.18-20, through the preaching of the word, the celebration of the sacraments and the provision of pastoral care.

The chapter continues by examining how the term 'ministry' should be understood and how ministry differs from discipleship. Having explored the meaning of ministry, the chapter looks in turn at ordained ministry and lay ministry, considering both the overall characteristics of each type of ministry and the particular forms of ministry that exist within each of them. The chapter finishes by exploring the issue of the overlap between ordained and lay ministries, accepting that this overlap exists, but arguing that there are, nevertheless, certain criteria that enable us to distinguish the two types of ministry.

- The fifth chapter summarizes the argument of the report and offers some conclusions and recommendations.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part summarizes the contents of the three previous chapters and the conclusions reached in each of them. On the basis of the overall theological reflection contained in these chapters, the second part then concludes the report by setting out a series of recommendations relating to lay pastoral assistants, churchwardens, Church Army Evangelists, Readers and deacons.

Ministry is a huge subject and we are conscious that we have only scratched the surface of it. There are major areas that we have not tackled. In particular, we are aware that we have not been able to do justice to all the recent publications on missiology. What we have offered is a framework for thinking about certain key issues on which the Church of England needs greater theological clarity. Ours is an attempt to respond, in the first instance, to the request of the General Synod for closer reflection on the relationship between ordained ministry (specifically the diaconate) and various kinds of recognized lay ministry that are now, it seems, more needed than ever before..

Chapter 2

Ministry, the New Testament and the Church today

Introduction

We begin our enquiry into the nature of ministry with the New Testament. Here we find some of the earliest Christian attempts to identify what ministry is. However, we should note first of all that extreme caution must be used when exploring the New Testament evidence. The New Testament context is not a direct match with our own. Inevitably, ministry in the first century was very different to ministry today. One of the challenges that we face in this area is how much we can legitimately transfer from the New Testament into our own context and how much must be understood as unique to the first century.

The first step in this approach is to identify what the situation was in the first century before trying to work out what implications this has for the contemporary church. When we do this, we encounter questions of method, the same questions that affect all areas of New Testament research. These questions focus around the issue of how we identify what went on the in the Early Church. There are numerous ways of attempting to do this but two of the most significant are word studies and attempts to reconstruct the development of the earliest Church.

Until recently, word studies were the major method employed by scholars who were attempting to understand the New Testament period better. This technique is illustrated best in the magisterial *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT) edited by G. Kittel.[1] This nine-volume work has proved to be the starting

point for many explorations in the New Testament. In 1965, roughly about the same time as the English edition of TDNT was being prepared, James Barr published a powerful critique of this method of interpreting the New Testament.[2] The problem is that TDNT is interested in 'concept history' and how ideas about different subjects developed, but it explores this solely through the use of individual words. The problems that can arise when this method is taken to an extreme can be illustrated by looking at the word *ekklēsia*, normally translated 'church'. It may seem obvious to identify what the New Testament writers thought about 'the Church' by looking at the occasion on which they use the word *ekklēsia*. This is an excellent starting place but a study which only looked at the word *ekklēsia* would produce an impoverished picture of 'church' because it would exclude other images of 'church', such as Body of Christ, the Elect and so on, which would not be included in the original word study. It would also exclude an understanding of how gatherings of Christians related to each other, how they developed from loosely defined groupings into more structured gatherings and so on.

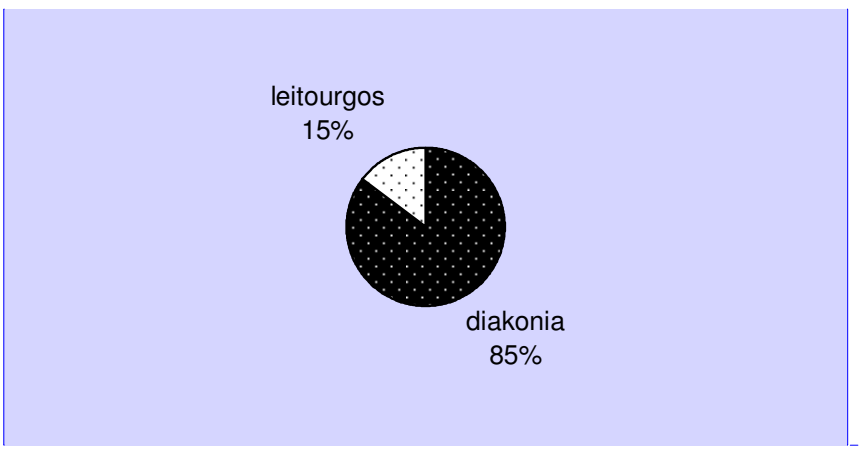
Word studies are a helpful starting point in understanding an issue, but they cannot be the sole method for identifying the situation in the Early Church. Word studies need to be backed up by historical reconstructions of the developments of the first century, which allow a wider view of the topic under consideration. Only once this has been done does it become more possible to ask the question of how the New Testament might shape our understandings of our modern context. So this chapter will fall into three sections: first, an examination of some key words that are relevant for understanding ministry; second, an attempt to map the development of ministry in the

first century; and finally, an exploration of how what has been discovered might be relevant for the church today.

Word study: exploring *diakonia* in the New Testament

Translational issues

As we shall see in a later chapter, the term 'ministry' is becoming increasingly undefined and is often used for anything that is done by Christians within the church (or indeed outside it). The reason for this confusion can be traced back to the New Testament and our English translations of the Greek text. The problem there is that, for good translational reasons, there is little consistency in the way in which English words are used to render Greek words. So when the words 'ministry', 'minister', 'to minister' etc. occur in our English translations, 85 per cent of the time they are translating the word *diakonia* and its cognates (29 times).[3] For the rest of the time (15 per cent) the words are translating an entirely different word and its cognates – *leitourgos* – (5 times). These proportions can be shown like this:



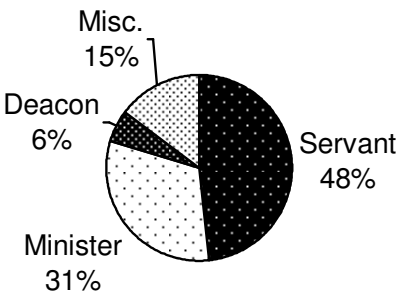
In Greek these two words have different roots. The verb *leitourgeo* was widespread in Greek democracies to refer to the service that all citizens with a certain level of income should perform, at their own expense, for the welfare of the city. From this

background, the word came to be used for any service rendered to another. It also picked up a specific meaning of the service rendered by a priest at a shrine. The New Testament usage of the word has the more general resonance in passages such as Romans 15.27 and the more specifically priestly resonance, particularly in Hebrews (e.g. Hebrews 10.11). It is interesting to note that there were four words that the New Testament writers could have used to denote the serving of a community in an official capacity (*telos*, *timē, archē* and *leitourgia*). While these words are used in the New Testament (with the exception of *telos*, which is not used in this way in the New Testament) to denote ministry, they are used of Jewish leaders, civil officers, angels and Jesus, but not of members of the Church. Only *leitourgia* is used of ministry, and even there it does not appear to be used of an 'office' within the Church. This seems to indicate that the New Testament writers went out of their way to avoid using words that had connotations of office holding in the early period.

The most common group of words translated in English by 'minister', 'ministry', etc. are connected to the word *diakonia*. If it is hard to work out what *leitourgos* and its cognates mean, it is even harder to identify the meaning of *diakonia* and its cognates, but as the vast majority of references to 'ministry' in the New Testament are to the Greek use of this word it is important to attempt to come close to some sort of definition of the word.

The whole situation is complicated by the fact that *diakonia* and its cognates are not always translated by the same English word.[4] In fact half (48 per cent) of the times that *diakonia* is translated in the NRSV (43 occurrences) the word is rendered as 'service', 'servant' etc.; 31 per cent of the time (28 occurrences) it is translated as

'ministry', 'minister' etc.; only 6 per cent of the time (5 occurrences) is it translated 'deacon' and in a further 13 occurrences (15 per cent of the time) none of these other words is thought sufficient and so it is rendered variously: 'provider', 'helpers', 'administer', 'attendants', 'task', 'relief', 'mission', 'distribution of food', 'prepared', 'do work' and 'wait on tables'. Like this:



These translational issues indicate four things:

- First, that the New Testament seems to have avoided using obvious, familiar words for ministry.
- Second, that the word *diakonia* and its cognates are not easily translated into English.
- Third, that we need to take care before assuming that we know what is being referred to when the word 'ministry' occurs in our English Bibles.
- And fourth, that the words 'deacon', 'diaconate', etc. are not as easily distinguished from other forms of ministry as might sometimes be supposed.

The confusion that can sometimes occur around what ministry is can, in fact, be traced back to the New Testament and the wide variety of possible meanings for the words *diakonia* and its cognates.

Diakonia in scholarship

It is clear from the translations that modern translators consider 'ministry' and 'service' to be very closely related – and to a certain extent interchangeable. Service is ministry and ministry, service. This view is not unique to modern translators of the New Testament. Until recently most New Testament scholars considered the *diakon-* words to imply notions of menial service.[5] One of the most influential articles on the subject was written by H. W. Beyer and can be found in Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* Here Beyer maintains that in the New Testament *diakonia* means both '"waiting at table" or in a rather wider sense "provision for bodily sustenance"' and also 'any "discharge of service" in genuine love'. [6] This view represented the norm of scholarship both before and after Beyer wrote and can be found in numerous writings, from a Greek–English lexicon,[7] to a work of ecclesiology,[8] a feminist critique,[9] a consideration of the diaconate,[10] a treatment of leaders in the Early Church[11] and an article on ministry in the New Testament in a leading biblical dictionary.[12] This definition has gone on to influence the way in which ministry is perceived, so that many people today would identify ministry as service. So, for example, the benchmark WCC text *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982) defines ministry as 'service to which the whole people of God is called'.[13] This *BEM* quote also represents the widely held contemporary view that ministry is undertaken by all within the Church and not just by the ordained few. This has further confused an understanding of the diaconate. If *diakonia* (ministry) is understood as referring to the whole Church, what then is the distinctive role of a deacon? Attempts to define the diaconate can all too easily appear to be attempts to remove legitimate ministries from the whole people of God.

In recent years, one way forward has been offered by John N. Collins, a Roman Catholic writer who lives in Melbourne, Australia. Collins' PhD research led him into re-examining the word *diakonia* and he has continued to write on the subject ever since.[14] He was not by any means the first person to question the scholarly consensus that *diakonia* is almost synonymous with service but his argument on the subject is the most careful and sustained.

J. N. Collins and *diakonia*[15]

Collins' most sustained argument about a possible redefinition of the word *diakonia* can be found in his book of that name which was published in 1990.[16] Here, Collins carefully and painstakingly examines the assumptions of service that are associated with the *diakon-* words. His starting point is Mark 10.45, the famous passage in which Jesus appears to set out his task on earth as one of humble service and death: 'For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many'. In the rest of the book, Collins looks carefully at the range of possible meanings for the word group both outside and within the Bible.

Part 2 of his book involves a detailed examination of the use of the word group in Greek literature, the Septuagint (the LXX, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) and Egyptian papyri. His conclusions are that 'go-between' is a more natural translation of the *diakon-* group of words than 'menial servant'. His examination of the relevant New Testament passages in the final part of the book supports this finding. In the Pauline Epistles, the phrase 'go between' often makes better sense of Paul's use of the words than 'service' does. Take, for example, 2 Corinthians 3.7-9:

> Now if the **ministry** of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside, how much more will the **ministry** of the Spirit come in glory? For if there was glory in the **ministry** of condemnation, much more does the **ministry** of justification abound in glory![17]

The meaning of *diakonia* here seems to have more to do with mediation than with humble service. Paul is contrasting that which mediates death, i.e. letters chiselled on stone tablets with that which mediates the Spirit.[18] In Colossians 1.23 Paul is described as a *diakonos* of the gospel 'which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven'. Again it makes most sense to understand this as an act of mediation: as a *diakonos* Paul is called to mediate the gospel to those around him.[19]

It is important to understand Collins' aim here, since he has, unjustly, been accused of replacing one basic meaning 'menial service' for another basic meaning 'go-between or emissary'. In fact this is far from the truth. What Collins does, painstakingly, in his book *Diakonia* is to examine as many examples of the group of words *diakon-* as possible and to determine in each context the best meaning for the word. He is immensely resistant to saying that *diakonia* never refers to menial service but only to agency, because that would be untrue. What he does say is that *diakonia* and cognates more often have connotations of agency and being a go-between than they do menial service. The words have a range of reference, which includes agency, attendance, carrying a message and menial service. There are, of course, occasions when the words do refer to menial service but these occasions should not be extrapolated outwards to assume that the words mean menial service on all occasions. Collins

suggests that a core meaning that holds together this broad range of reference is that of a mandated task.

Collins' work is complemented in this area by similar work done on the meaning of slavery in the ancient world. Dale Martin has argued persuasively that slavery must also be seen to have a meaning that is much wider than menial service. In his book *Slavery as Salvation* he argues that a slave with a good master could be upwardly mobile and end up supervising estates, managing accounts and on occasion actually be a delegate for the master.[20] Although being a slave could lead to humble service in the ancient world, it could also confer respect and a certain level of honour. Collins' work seems to point to a similar situation being true of the role of a 'servant'.

Examples of occasions when the *diakon-* words do have a meaning closer to menial service can be found in the Gospels. Thus Matthew 22.13 has the king instructing his servants at the marriage feast to act a little like bouncers and to evict the badly dressed guest. In a similar way Luke 17.8 ('Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and **serve** me while I eat and drink') uses the verb *diakonei* very clearly in the context of waiting at tables. There is also a range of examples in which the terms is clearly used as a synonym for 'humble' or 'least' (e.g. Mark 9.35: 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all').

So was a '*diakonos*' honoured or menial? The answer is that it depends on the context: some *diakonoi* have positions of honour; some are regarded as much more menial. Once this becomes clear it is much easier to understand why this word became so central to early Christian writing. The ethic of the early church was one of

subversion: the least were to be given the greatest honour (Matthew 18.1-4); strength was to be found in weakness (2 Corinthians 12.9). A word that could convey both honour and humble service fitted well into the belief system of Jesus and his earliest followers. But what unites these different contexts is the carrying out of a mandated task, whether it be waiting at table, because that is what the master requires, or going on a high-level embassy with an important message from someone in authority. Collins' ends his study back where he began with Mark 10.45. In many ways this verse has shaped the churches' understanding of ministry. Jesus' own ministry is commonly understood as humble service, which is intended to act as a model for all Christians. Collins' argues, however, that this interpretation arises from a misunderstanding of this verse itself. The verse is traditionally split into two halves 'for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,' and 'and to give his life a ransom for many'. Thus there are two reasons why Jesus came: to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Collins proposes, however, that the verse be split at a different point: 'for the Son of Man came not to be served,' and 'but to serve to give his life a ransom for many'. If the verse is split here, Jesus had only one purpose in coming – to give his life as a ransom for many. Collins proposes, therefore, that this verse means that Jesus did not come on his own authority to send people to act for him, but to carry out a task to which he was commissioned by God, which was to give his life as a ransom for many. This is an interpretation that is actually much closer to Johannine theology than the traditional understanding.[21]

No treatment of the use of *diakonia* and cognates can be complete without an exploration of Acts 6.1-4, the central passage regarded by many to establish the

meaning of *diakonia* as menial service and in particular waiting at tables. The NRSV translation illustrates well the connections that are usually made:

> Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected **in the daily distribution of food** (*tē diakonia tē kathēmerinē*). And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should neglect the word of God **in order to wait on tables** (*diakonein*). Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and **to serving the word** *(tē diakonia tou logou*).'

One of the striking features of this hugely important passage is the range of English words used to translate the Greek words. The same group of words is translated 'daily distribution of food', 'waiting on tables' and 'serving the word' in the space of only four verses. Collins argues that these words have been mistranslated in this context and should instead be read as follows:

> Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected **in the daily ministry** [i.e. the day by day ministry of the word]. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should neglect the word of God [i.e. the public proclamation of the word before large crowds] in order **to minister at table** [i.e. in a more local, domestic context]…we, for our part will dedicate ourselves to prayer and to **ministering the word** [i.e. the public proclamation of the word].'[22]

The virtue of Collins' proposal is that he attempts to render the *diakon-* words in a similar way throughout the passage. Thus he understands both uses in this passage to mean sharing the word: the action of the seven is to share the word in a local setting and that of the twelve to share it through public proclamation. The drawback of the theory, however, is that Collins seems to have pressed the point too far, to the extent that it undermines the good points that it contains. It is not necessary to interpret the action of the seven as 'ministering at table' by sharing the word, for *diakonia* to have the resonance of commissioned service. In the passage the factors that characterize both the actions of the seven and that of the twelve is that they carry out their commissioned activity – the seven through their ministry at table and the twelve through their ministry of the word. Waiting at table can still be a commissioned task just as proclaiming the word is. While this is not ruled out by Collins,[23] the emphasis of his argument seems to suggest that he understands this passage more in terms of 'word' than of 'waiting at table'.

If this interpretation of Acts 6 is correct, it highlights the shift that Collins' basic proposal opens up in our understanding of *diakonia*. The focus of ministry is so often 'service' and care for those around us. Collins' proposal changes the focus from what is done (i.e. humble service) to for whom it is done (i.e. who sends the *diakonos*). Thus the primary focus becomes not humble service but commissioned activity. The focus of Jesus' 'ministry' was doing the will of God. The focus of the seven and of the twelve in Acts 6 was doing the task assigned to them by the Church. For the seven this was 'ministry at table'; for the twelve this was prayer and the ministry of the word. Thus the importance of *diakonia* becomes not what is done but why it is done. This clarification of the major focus of *diakonia* moves us a long way in

understanding the concept in the New Testament period. If the concept of agency, being a go-between, or commissioned activity underlies many of the uses of the word, then *diakonia* becomes as much about who sends the agent as about what they were sent to do. In other words, the range of meaning behind *diakonia* includes 'apostle' as well as 'slave' or *doulos*, and hence includes a flavour of 'mission' as well as of 'ministry'.

Responses to Collins

When Collins' work was first published it received generally positive reviews on his use of the New Testament and other ancient sources,[24] on the significance of his work for ecclesiology[25] and on the importance of his work for classical studies.[26] Since then responses have been sparse and many writings both on ecclesiology and on the New Testament seem unaware of Collins' thesis. For example, R. T. France, in his excellent commentary on Mark's Gospel, makes no reference at all to Collins' detailed exegesis of Mark 10.45.[27]

This has begun to change, however, and in 2000 the Third Edition of Bauer, Danker, Arndt and Gingrich's prestigious *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, which is the major lexicon for the study of New Testament Greek, has now adopted the meaning of 'intermediary' as a meaning for *diakonia*.[28] This shift of definition in BDAG will inevitably begin to affect how people understand these words and, in time, will have a parallel impact on how ministry is understood.

Humble service

There have, however, been vigorous rebuttals of Collins' theological argument, though not, it should be noted, of his findings from the Hellenistic texts. There are three major concerns with Collins' proposals: first, that they mark a shift away from the centrality of humble service in the Christian tradition; second, that Collins seems to be limiting who can 'minister'; and third, concerns about his method. We need to note that Collins does not argue that *diakonia* does not include humble service, merely that it does not *always* mean humble service. In other words it is not the core, or essential meaning of the word. The foot washing passage in John 13 passage is interesting in this context. Over the years foot washing has become a central symbol of diaconal ministry and recalls Jesus' washing of the feet of the twelve recorded in John 13. However, none of the words cognate to *diakonia* appear in this passage. This action of Jesus toward his disciples tells us something profound about the nature of the Incarnation, but there is little to connect it with the diaconate. Some have suggested that Luke 22.27 ('For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves [*diakonōn*]? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves [*diakonōn*]') lies behind this passage, since it is set in Luke's account of the Last Supper and uses the verb *diakoneō*.[29] This connection seems unlikely, however, given the context of the Lukan account in which it is clear that serving at table is the implication of the verb, not foot washing as in John 13, and many scholars reject this suggestion. The washing of the disciples' feet in John's Gospel has many resonances, including priestly ones, but none of them seem to be connected to *diakonia*.

In fact, Jesus' words seem to make it clear that his action is one that all his disciples should follow: 'So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought

to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you' (John 13.14-15). The humble service represented by Jesus here and elsewhere in the Gospels, then, is an example that all should follow. It is an essential part of Christian discipleship, not something to be preserved for ministers or the diaconate in particular. Of course, deacons should display such characteristics of humble service, but then so should we all. In this way, humble, caring service towards one's neighbour is expected of *all* Christian disciples, whoever they are. It will, of course, also be displayed by those in 'ministry', but because they are Christian disciples, not because it is the particular preserve of ministry. Accepting Collins' definition of *diakonia*, therefore, does not mark a shift away from humble service in the Christian tradition, but a reaffirmation of it right at the centre of what it means to be Christian. It is something that marks all Christians in their desire to follow God faithfully.[30]

Who can 'minister'?

Another controversial part of Collins' interpretation is that he says that 'ministry is a charge put upon someone'[31] and cannot be understood to imply that 'anything any Christian undertook or did was (or should have been recognised as) ministry'.[32] He follows this up rather more starkly in his second book *Are all Christians Ministers?*, to which he answers a resounding 'No' on the first page.[33] He argues for a more limited, more closely defined understanding of ministry, in which the role of *diakonos* is open only to those ordained deacon.

Two important passages in Collins' argument here are 1 Corinthians 12.4-6 and Ephesians 4.11-12. These passages have been used to argue that ministry is something done by everyone in the church. Collins' challenges this interpretation and argues

instead that they do not establish that 'ministry' is done by all. In 1 Corinthians 12.4-6:

> Now there are varieties of gifts (*charisma*), but the same Spirit;
> and there are varieties of services (*diakonia*), but the same Lord;
> and there are varieties of activities (*energma*), but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

the three statements are normally understood as mutually equivalent and as applying to all. So all have gifts, all have services (or ministries) and all have activities (or energies). Collins, however, argues that the second two (ministries and operations) are dependent on the first (gifts). So there are many diverse gifts in the Church, but two specific outworkings of this: ministries, which people like Paul and Apollos do, and operations (or energies), which 'expressed themselves in a diverse range of activities across the whole spectrum of the congregation'.[34] Collins' theory raises an important question of interpretation. It is clear that these three cannot be regarded as being direct equivalents, any more than Spirit, Lord and God can be regarded as being exactly the same. At the same time, however, the three must have some point of connection, again just as Spirit, Lord and God do. The question is what is that connection?

The crucial question in this context is who has the gifts, ministries and activities? Is it everyone or just some people? The majority position among scholars is that all have gifts, all have services and all have activities.[35] This is a position that Collins' interpretation opposes, arguing that, while all have gifts, only some have services and some have activities. A close reading of the text, however, suggests that in fact this is not the purpose of the passage. The passage's purpose is to set up the issue of unity and diversity, which is the theme for the whole passage. The focus in verses 4-6 is

that variety exists, but Paul does not indicate quite to whom these gifts, ministries, and activities relate. It could be the whole body, or just a few; Paul does not say. The important feature is not which member of the body has gifts, ministries or activities, but that the whole body has them. The only part of 1 Corinthians 12 that gives a clue is verse5 where Paul does say that everyone receives 'the manifestation of the Spirit'. It is this that belongs to all.

Ephesians 4.11-12 sets up similar issues. The question here is whether there should be a comma after saints or not. The difference is marked. If a comma is absent, as it is in all contemporary translations,

> the gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.[36]

the verse means that the saints do the work of ministry. If it is present as it was in the 1946 RSV, then the three become equivalent phrases (for equipping the saints, for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ) which is something done by the apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers and received by the saints. The question is a matter of syntax and both meanings are possible. The three phrases (equip the saints, work of ministry and building up . . .) are prefixed by a preposition: the first is *pros* the second two are *eis*. The syntax of Ephesians is notoriously complex, so this change may or may not be significant. The question cannot be adequately solved, as Thiselton tries to do in the case of 1 Corinthians and Barnett in the case of Ephesians, by appealing to a consensus within scholarship.[37] The whole point is that Collins is suggesting a radically new hypothesis and, as we established above, this has not received the treatment it deserves. The fact that scholars have not

so far adopted his theory is proof in neither direction. Nevertheless, the fact that the syntax is not most naturally read as Collins reads it may sway us more in one direction than another.

It is again interesting to note that the logic of this passage, even in modern translations, does not necessarily mean that all do 'the work of ministry'. Even if the RSV punctuation favoured by Collins is not inserted into this passage, it does not necessarily mean that everyone *will* do the work of ministry. The gifts Paul speaks about equip the saints for the work of ministry – they get them ready for it – but do they actually do it? It would be possible to read this passage as saying that the saints are prepared for the task of *diakonia* to which the Church may or may not commission them.[38] All should be prepared for ministry, something that stresses the need for a high level of training and education for all, but they might not all be commissioned at once. Such a reading would widen the scope of ministry from Collins' narrow definition, but narrow the popular understanding of ministry for all at all times. We should take care, however, before resting too much of a case upon these passages. Their meaning is not immediately transparent. Although a case can be made for the word 'ministry' referring to a small number of people, it can also be made for it referring to all Christians. Both are reasonable interpretations of the passage. The problem is that these passages simply do not point us clearly in either direction; we must take care therefore before building a case too firmly upon them.

There is a way through this debate, which both defines the nature of ministry and encourages ministry in the widest number of people. It is possible to give something a greater sense of identity without making it exclusive. This way forward is provided by

the shift in meaning from ministry being 'loving care for one's neighbour' to ministry being 'carrying out a commissioned task'. Ministry becomes, then, something that all can be called to but is not necessarily something that all will do all the time. Some commissioned tasks will be lifelong; others temporary. The focus then lies around commissioning rather than around what is done. The debate about who can minister can, in fact, become something of a red herring. The important feature is not who does it but why it is done.

Summary

Collins' interpretation of the word *diakonia* and its cognates offers some immensely helpful pointers towards gaining a sense of clarity about the nature of *diakonia* in the New Testament. If his presentation of the range of meanings – from humble service to commissioned agency – that lie behind the *diakon-* words is correct, and there seem to be good arguments in its favour, then our understanding of this word group shifts. The shift is from understanding the word group to refer to an act of humble, loving service on all occasions, to being the carrying out of a commissioned task, which may be humble, loving service but may also be something else. In other words the focus moves from what is done – the act of loving service – to why it is done – because someone has been commissioned by God or by the Church.

However, Collins' proposal does not complete our picture of ministry in the New Testament. Two things remain. On the one hand, his word study does not explain how *diakonia* fits in to the New Testament understanding of church, leadership or mission. In order to do this, we need to attempt to sketch out a little of the history of the earliest Christians in the first Christian century. On the other hand, we need to work out how far the word *diakonia* and cognates maps on to our modern understandings of

ministry, and out of that, how the diaconate fits into ministry as a whole. We will turn to these issues in the next two sections.

The development of ministry in the Early Church

The complexity of the task

Any study of the development of the earliest Christian communities is provisional, governed as much by what we do not know as what we do know. What we have in the New Testament texts is a number of snapshots of early Christian communities. The challenge for anyone attempting to reconstruct the development of the Early Church is to work out the connections between these communities. There are some things that we will never know. For example, the Johannine community is thought by various scholars to have been based in Ephesus. What is very hard to ascertain is whether this is the same community that is described as founded by Paul in Acts and that is addressed in the letter to the Ephesians, or a separate one. Other things that we do not know include whether Christianity continued and developed in Galilee or died out, to be replaced later, or whether the Jerusalem community became alienated from the Pauline churches after the events reported in Acts 15 and Galatians 2.[39]

Before we begin to attempt to chart the development of ministry in the earliest Christian communities, another issue must be noted. The one factor that characterizes the earliest Church is diversity: like the Judaism out of which they grew, the earliest Christian communities found different ways of expressing their Christian faith. In a recent study, which explored the origins of early Christian worship, Burtchaell argued that the conclusions drawn about the nature of early Christian worship and the structure of their communities were heavily influenced by the church tradition of the

person involved. Those who consider apostolic succession and ordained office to be an essential part of the Christian tradition can see in the New Testament period seeds of what will, in a later period, grow into fully blown church order and a threefold order of ministry. Those who do not consider church order to be essential can likewise find plenty of evidence to support their position.[40] The reason for this is, of course, that there is such a variety of views between different Christian communities over the course of the first Christian century that it is possible to find at least fragments of evidence for many different understandings of community and of relationship in the texts of the New Testament. Some of the early Christians considered their Christian allegiance to grow out of their Judaism and so to be dependent upon and shaped by their synagogue worship; others, more influenced by Greek city states, saw Christian community as shaped by allegiances set up through households. This inevitably affected the way in which they viewed the structures of their own Christian community.

The work of two recent scholars illustrates this well. James Burtchaell, mentioned above, in his 1992 study of the development of the Church, argued that the Christian communities developed alongside their Jewish counterparts until this became impossible. As a result he sees in early Christian communities a mirror of structures found in the synagogues. He also argues that Christians used the words they did to describe their communities because they found their roots in the tradition of the Hebrew Bible but had not been taken over by their Jewish compatriots. As a result they could differentiate themselves from Jewish worship while demonstrating a strong similarity to it. Thus they chose to use the word *ekklēsia* instead of *synagōgē*, *diakonos* instead of *hypēretēs* and *episkopos* instead of *archisynagōgos*.[41]

In contrast, Wayne Meeks has argued that it was the household and not the synagogue that influenced early Christian communities. He argues that just as the household/extended family was the basic unit in the city so it was the basic unit in Christian communities. Meeks acknowledges the importance of synagogues, voluntary associations and philosophic or rhetorical schools in shaping Christian community but concludes that it is households that form the primary influence ensuring a thorough networking of relationships throughout the city.

As soon as the situation is spelt out in this way it becomes clear that both are correct in their own context. Meek's primary concern was Pauline communities in large Greek cities, whereas Burtchaell's concern is largely Jewish communities wanting to stay close to their roots.[42] Who is right? They may both be, but this highlights the complexity of tracing the development of leadership in the Early Church. The nature of ministry will depend on the context and what influences have shaped that context. Some communities may indeed have modelled their structure on the synagogue, while others modelled it on the household and others still drew influences from both settings and probably other settings as well.

Ministry and governance in the Early Church

When we begin to explore the history of the New Testament period with regard to ministry, it is important to ask the question, What are we looking for? In other words, can we establish the early Christians understanding of 'ministry' by exploring the nature of leadership in the Early Church? The answer to this must of course be, 'No' – or at least, 'Not entirely'. If ministry is to be linked with *diakonia*, then ministry is

about acting on behalf of someone else. If it is linked with *leitourgia*, it is more about acting for the good of the community. In neither usage is it about leading or governance per se, but in a sense leadership is a subset of ministry. All those who lead, minister, but not all those who minister, lead. A search for 'ministry' in the early Christian communities can begin with patterns of leadership but must not end there.

It has long been recognized in scholarship that there were two major forms of leadership in the Early Church: itinerant and resident leadership.[43] Furthermore, scholars generally argue that at some point during the first century a shift took place from itinerant to resident leadership and that this became the norm in subsequent Christianity.[44] This distinction between itinerant and resident leadership may be overstated but there is ample evidence to support the principle.

The origins of itinerant leadership may traced back to the Gospels and the mission imperative of Jesus that the twelve and the seventy-two (Mark 6.7-13; Matthew 10.5-15; Luke 9.1-6; 10.1-12) should go out and proclaim the kingdom of God, taking nothing with them but accepting support from those they met on the way. Gerd Theissen pointed out a conflict between this model of itinerancy and that of Paul, who supported himself on his missionary journey.[45] This seems to have caused conflicts in places where these two models collided (e.g. 1 Corinthians 9.1-27; 1 Thessalonians 2.9), but although there was difference in how the itinerancy was enacted, there was a common core in the type of leadership that took place.

Itinerant leadership

Itinerant leadership is closely tied to apostleship. The word 'apostle' means at its basic level agent or envoy or one who is sent The word is first attached to the twelve

in the Gospels (Matthew 10.2; Mark 3.14; 6.30; Luke 6.13; 9.10; 11.49; 17.5; 22.14; 24.10) and in Acts 1.26 Matthias was chosen to be 'added to the eleven apostles'. From then on the term becomes harder to tie down. Acts uses the term 'the apostles' to refer to leaders in the Jerusalem church as verses such as Acts 11.1 indicate ('now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea'). By Acts 15 'apostle' has been added to 'elders' to refer to those in leadership, since Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to talk to the 'apostles and elders'. It is likely, then, that for Luke 'apostle' was used solely of the original eleven plus Matthias.

In Paul the usage is different. Paul used the word to refer to his own calling and action in the world. It was also used by others, e.g. the super-apostles of 2 Corinthians 11.5 and in the Pauline tradition as one of the gifts (1 Corinthians 12.28-30 and Ephesians 4.11). We also know, however, that some, at least, of the Christians to whom Paul spoke disputed his use of the term.[46] As a result, most scholars would agree that the term did not have titular status in the early period, but referred to the bearing of authority rather than the holding of an 'office'. Hence, Paul's apostleship was disputed because of the authority that the use of such a word was meant to confer.
It would be wrong, however, to argue that itinerant leadership died out after the earliest period. There is evidence in the Johannine Epistles that restrictions needed to be put in place on who was accepted by the communities, so in 2 John 10 clear guidance is given as to who is to be accepted: 'Do not receive into the house or welcome anyone who comes to you and does not bring this teaching'. The *Didache*, probably dating to sometime in the second century, also points to the continued presence of itinerant leaders and the need to regulate them:

> But let every one who comes in the name of the Lord be received; And then when you have tested him you shall know him, for you shall have understanding on the right hand and on the left. If the visitor is a traveller, assist him, so far as you are able; But he shall not stay with you more than two or three days, if it be necessary. But if being a craftsman, he wishes to settle up with you, let him work for and eat his bread. But if he has no craft, according to your wisdom provide how he shall live as a Christian among you, but not in idleness. If he will not do this, he is trafficking upon Christ. (*Didache* 12.1-7)

It would be equally wrong to attempt to differentiate too clearly between itinerant and residential leadership. Peter, James and John, for example, both lived in Jerusalem and travelled around (or at least sent others to do so), so Galatians 2.1-13 recounts what happened when 'certain people from James' arrived in Antioch. Thus the role of the itinerant was not just travelling but of making links between the differing local congregations.

Alongside the apostles in Pauline churches were those that Paul addressed as 'fellow workers'; in other words, those who accompanied Paul and worked closely with him. People such as Silvanus, Timothy and Sosthenes took messages for Paul from place to place and, from time to time, stayed in the places to which they had been sent. These fellow workers had no fixed role some were largely independent from Paul (e.g. Barnabas), others worked with him occasionally but then remained with congregations in fixed places (e.g. Prisca and Aquilla), while others travelled with him (e.g. Timothy).[47]

Local leadership

There are very few references to 'formal offices' in the New Testament. Although it is clear that there were those whom we would regard as leaders, on the whole they are not given titles, so for example in 1 Thessalonians 5.12 Paul refers to Christian leaders in Thessalonica, but without a title ('But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you').[48] Even where apparent gifts are referred to, the variety of the lists and the juxtaposition of gifts indicates that these are not formal roles but functions within the community.[49]

Christian communities were not, however, devoid of leadership. Campbell has argued extensively that the leaders of the local communities were heads of households under the authority of the Patron style leadership to which Greek households were accustomed.[50] Horrell is not convinced by this position and argues both that there is evidence that people other than householders had positions of importance in the early communities[51] and that leadership, whoever held it, was not exclusive as the major power lay with the itinerant apostles such as Paul. Over time the situation changed until, in the passage from the *Didache* that we noted above, the local community were encouraged to decide whether they accepted the ministry of the itinerant or not.
We can also trace this shift in the New Testament itself. The Pastoral Epistles, whether considered to be by Paul or not, come from a later period in the first century than much of the rest of the New Testament. In these Epistles we discover references to the qualities needed in an *episkopos* and in a *diakonos*; unfortunately in neither case does the author tell us what the role of such a person is, nor indeed whether this role is in any way fixed. Nevertheless, the passages in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 indicate that

the local community had begun to give titles to those exercising leadership in the local church.

Although no specific role is assigned to an *episkopos* or to a *diakonos* in the Pastoral Epistles, it is possible to discern something about the expectations assigned to each word. *Episkopoi* above all are to be able to demonstrate that they are able to manage a household so that they can do the same thing to the congregation. This seems to indicate that the *ekklēsia* at this point is still very close in structure to the house churches of the earlier period. The *diakonoi* are to be proved in this context by their ability to demonstrate that they hold fast to the mystery of the faith. Other features of interest in the Pastoral Epistles include the command that Timothy should not 'lay hands on anyone hastily' (1 Timothy 5.22, NRSV mg.) and that Titus should appoint elders (*presbuteroi*) in every town (Titus 1.5).

Most scholars agree that the reference to *presbuteroi* in Titus should be read in the light of Acts 20.28, which, though addressing *presbuteroi* in verse 17, states that the Spirit has made them *episkopoi*. As a result, it seems likely that the terms *presbuteroi* and *episkopoi* are interchangeable in the New Testament period and do not refer to two different 'roles'. The author of the Pastoral Epistles is clearly strengthening the position of local leaders by attempting to give uniform criteria for their selection (personal quality) and appointment (not too quickly) but, nevertheless, the rather vague use of the words without any explicit role attached seems to point to the words still having more of a functional role than a titular role even in the Pastoral Epistles.

Nevertheless, Timothy and Titus seem to be given oversight of the churches of Ephesus and Crete in a way that distinguishes them from the elders of those churches. Some take this as one strand in the development of a distinct episcopal office. Various scholars seek to trace a line in usage of these words both before and after the Pastoral Epistles in order to gain some insight into how these words might have developed in meaning. Although *episkpos* and *diakonos* are used here in a more defined way than elsewhere, the terms do occur earlier in the history of the earliest Christian communities. Paul uses the word *diakonos* regularly to refer to his role in spreading the gospel and to those like him who do the same. He also uses it to refer to Phoebe in Romans 16.1 who was a *diakonos* of the church in Cenchreae, visiting those in Rome. It is very difficult to work out if this word has any kind of titular meaning here. It seems clear that she does have recognition in her own context (she was a benefactor of many, Romans 16.2), and that she was acting on behalf of the Christians in Cenchreae, though whether the word *diakonos* indicates this is unclear.

Both the words *episkopoi* and *diakonoi* occur in Philippians 1.1 side by side. Their usage here has caused much discussion. Georgi argues that the words are used synonymously here to refer to those who proclaim the gospel;[52] whereas Collins maintains that the two are not the same, but that the *diakonoi* were attached to the *epsikopoi* in function. [53] Both sides appeal to later usage to support their position. For example, *1 Clement* 42.4-5:

> And thus preaching through countries and cities, they established the first-fruits, having been proved in the Spirit, to be *bishops and deacons* of those who were about to believe. And this was not new, since indeed many ages before it was written about *bishops and deacons*. For thus the Scripture says

somewhere, 'I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith.'[54]

does not differentiate between 'bishops' and 'deacons'. Nor indeed does the *Didache* 15.1-3:

> Appoint for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and do not love of money, and who are true and approved; For they also perform to you the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore do not scorn them.[55]

It is very difficult to discern the reason for the lack of differentiation between *episkopos* and *diakonos* in these texts. It could be, as Georgi proposes, that the terms are synonymous[56] or, as Collins proposes, that the function of the *diakonos* is so linked to the *episkopos* that the two always appear together[57] or, as Burtchaell proposes, that these two functions are parallel to the *archisyngōgos* and *hypēretēs* and that this parallel was so well known that difference was understood if not stated.[58] It is more likely, however, that all and none of these theories are correct in that the early Christian communities were in period of transition in so many ways – from primarily itinerant to primarily local leadership, from an understanding of leadership as function to that of role – that the lack of clarity in these references points to precisely that, a lack of clarity in concept as well as in the usage of words. This seems to be confirmed by the other writer of the second century who is often cited in this area: Ignatius. Unlike *1 Clement* and the *Didache*, Ignatius does seem to have a degree of clarity about *episkopoi*, *presbuteroi* and *diakonoi*. The writings of Ignatius mark a significant moment in the development towards a structured, ordered local leadership.[59] Ignatius seems to have a clear differentiation between the three. So in his

letter to the Philadephians he says 'Give heed to the bishop, and to the elders and to the deacons' (*Philadelphians* 6.1) and in the *Epistle to the Trallians*:

> For whenever you submit to the bishop do it as to Jesus Christ . . . it is therefore necessary, whatever you do, to do nothing without the bishop but to submit also to the elders (*presbuterion*), as to the apostles of Jesus Christ. You must also please the deacons (*diakonoi*) in everyway, who are of the mysteries of Jesus Christ; for they are not deacons of meat and drink, but assistants (*hyperetai*) of the Church of God.[60]

The significance of these excerpts is that they indicate that, in Ignatius' churches at least, the *episkopoi, presbuteroi* and *diakonoi* were differentiated and that there was only one *episkopos* per community. This is the first evidence that exists of 'monepiscopacy', i.e. the recognition that there is only one *episkopos* in the community, as opposed to other texts that speak of *episkopoi* and therefore, oversight being held by more than one person.

It would be convenient to say that Ignatius represents a later more developed stage of Church history but the dates do not allow such a judgement. Ignatius is not that much later than *1 Clement* or the *Didache* (depending of course when these texts are dated), and instead reveals the variety in the development of early Christianity mentioned above. The transition towards a more ordered and structured community seems to have happened in Ignatius' churches earlier than in those to which *1 Clement* and the *Didache* were addressed.

What we can tell about leadership, then, in the first century is that in the earliest Christian communities the leadership lay primarily with itinerant apostles but that, by

the end of the first century and the beginning of the second, although itinerant ministry continued, a shift was taking place more towards local, resident leadership. This does not mean that there were only itinerant leaders in the early period and only resident, local leaders later on, but that the balance of power shifted from itinerant leaders to more resident ones. We can also tell that many of the words used for leaders, *episkopoi*, *presbuteroi*, *diakonoi*, referred more to a function (having oversight, being an elder etc.) than to an office, but that this again began to shift in the late first century or early second century to being a title describing a role, in at least some of the churches.

One of the interesting outcomes of Collins' work is that, if it is accepted that one of the meanings for *diakonos* can be close to 'apostle', then it becomes a link between itinerant and local leadership. A *diakonos* can be based in one local community but sent as an 'agent' with a commissioned task to other communities. This understanding of a 'deacon' can be seen in Ignatius who makes repeated references to the way in which deacons travel from community to community.[61] So in the *Epistle to the Philadelphians* 11.1-2 Ignatius refers to a deacon called Philo, 'a man of Cilicia, of high reputation, who still ministers to me in the word of God, along with Gaius and Agathopus, an elect man, who has followed me from Syria, not regarding his life', indicating that Philo was more attached in his ministry to Ignatius than to any particular community.

The Spirit's gifts and ministry

We have noted above the broad diversity of earliest Christianity, which meant that different communities did different things at different times. We can also find

evidence of variety within Paul himself. Take for example the lists of functions within the body of Christ that appear regularly throughout the Pauline corpus:

1 Corinthians 12.8-10	1 Corinthians 12.28-30	Romans 12.6-8	Ephesians 4.11
utterance of wisdom	apostles	prophecy	apostles
utterance of knowledge	prophets	ministry	prophets
faith	teachers	the teacher	evangelists
gifts of healing	deeds of power	the exhorter	pastors
working of miracles	gifts of healing	the giver	teachers
prophecy	forms of assistance	the compassionate one	
discernment of spirits	forms of leadership		
various kinds of tongues	various kinds of tongues		
interpretation of tongues			

What becomes clear from these lists is that Paul does not list the same functions all the time, nor is he consistent within the lists about how he lists the functions. Sometime he lists apparent roles ('apostles' or 'the teacher') and at other times functions ('discernment of spirits'), etc. This seems to indicate that Paul is not giving definitive lists here, but indicative lists: the kind of functions that can be undertaken in the body. These change depending of the context in which Paul is speaking and to which Paul is speaking. Meeks concludes from these lists that Paul is happy for there to be local variation and freedom in the exercise of these functions.

It is also interesting to note that Paul actually includes the word *diakonia* in the list in Romans 12 alongside other things that we might call 'ministry' such as teaching, exhorting and so on. This indicates that, here at least, *diakonia* has a specific usage alongside prophecy, teaching and so on, which Collins understands to have apostolic

overtones. This seems to make sense in the context, especially since 'apostle' appears in most of the other lists and not in Romans 12.

Furthermore, if we look at the word that links all these lists, it is not 'ministry' but *charisma* or 'gifts'. These different functions are given to all Christians, not as ministries but as gifts. The wealth of gifts that are given to the body of Christ give forth a wide range of functions that nourish and enable the Body of Christ; while we would call them ministries, Paul calls them 'gifts'.

Moving from New Testament usage to the modern Church

The above survey of New Testament evidence establishes some things about the New Testament period. The task now is to work out how these inform our modern context. A word study of the Greek that lies behind our English translations' 'ministry' indicates that 'ministry' translates two words, which, if we accept Collins' interpretation, bear a resemblance to each other. *Diakonia* has a wide range of reference, from humble service to honoured agency, but can be seen to focus around the meaning of carrying out a commissioned task. *Leitourgia* has the resonance of an action carried out on behalf of a community, which may sometimes involve ritual. The Greek words that lie behind 'ministry' then have a strong function pointing to representation and the carrying out of a commissioned task on behalf of another (the Christian community, the bishop, or Christ).

Diakonos, which is a cognate of *diakonia*, became used in the Early Church to designate one of the threefold orders of ministry: deacon. It is possible to trace the way in which the word developed from being a function within the Church, alongside many others, to being a role with a 'title' designating an 'office'. This development

was far from straightforward and developed at different speeds and in different ways from community to community and, although there are traces in the New Testament of its later development, it is still in a period of transition in the New Testament texts. Thus not every occurrence of *diakonia* and its cognates refers to ecclesial deacons, most refer to something else and to the more general action of either named individuals, like Paul or Phoebe, or of unnamed members of the body of Christ and their function within the body. Sometimes the word seems to have a clearly bounded specific meaning, e.g. in Romans 12.6 when it is ranged alongside prophecy, teaching and so on, whereas at other times it is used more generally, e.g. in 2 Corinthians 5 when it refers to the 'ministry' of death and the ministry of the Spirit.

One of the challenges for those who wish to use the New Testament to inform current practice is to work out how and what we should transfer from the New Testament into the modern Church. We cannot simply assume that, because *diakonos* can be demonstrated to mean something in the first century, that this is how deacons are to be understood in the Church today. Likewise we cannot ignore the lessons we learn from the New Testament, as though they are not relevant to modern practice.
The results of our study reveal that the broad definition of activity within and for the Body of Christ is 'charisms' or 'gifts'. All have gifts and are encouraged to yearn after the greater gifts for the sake of the Body (1 Corinthians 12.7 and 31). These gifts include functions that are associated with leadership (apostles, teaching, etc.), as well as those less associated with leadership (the giver, one who shows mercy, etc.). In fact the distinction between those who are leaders and those who are not is not made in Paul. What is important is seeking after the gifts of the Spirit and using them to build up the Body of Christ. This will be done through proclamation of the word, through

teaching, through prophecy, through healing, through giving, through exhortation, among many other gifts. If the interpretation of *diakonia* proposed by Collins is right, then the concept of humble service may well fit in here. We are all to follow Jesus' example of acting humbly in the world and to wash each other's feet, following the pattern of Jesus who washed his disciples' feet in John 13. Humble service is the way of the cross that all Christians are called to follow. This first step, then, reinforces and celebrates the importance of Christian discipleship for all baptized members of the Body of Christ.

Diakonia then becomes one of the gifts of the Spirit – as indeed Paul makes clear in Romans 12.6 – and again it is not necessarily associated with leadership, though it can be. If we accept Collins' interpretation of the word, then *diakonia* or ministry is that which someone is commissioned to do. It is a work of agency, possibly of representation. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are instructed in Ephesians 4 to make it a focus of their calling to equip the saints for *diakonia*, for the building up of the body of Christ. Ministry, then, requires two things: training (being equipped) and commissioning. Who then 'does' ministry? The answer would appear to be those equipped by the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and commissioned for the task. Beyond the sense of commissioning, the task of *diakonia* does not seem to be particularly defined – Paul uses the word regularly to refer in general to the work to which he is called, which includes being an apostle, etc.[62] The change of focus of the word allows 'ministry' to be fully about mission, as well as about the care for the Body of Christ. Ministry is about being an agent and, as Acts 6 demonstrates, this may be a *diakonia* of proclamation such as the twelve undertook or may be more about care and nurture for the Christian community. The

identifying feature of *diakonia* is the fact that the person is commissioned to the task. Over time, the word *diakonos*, as well as being a word to describe someone undertaking a *diakonia*, also became particularly attached to a particular role within the Church – what we now call the role of a deacon. There is little evidence to point to this gaining the full status of 'an office' in the New Testament period, though it very quickly accrued such a meaning. The challenge for a contemporary Church, which wishes to maintain a full understanding of the threefold order, is to find a way to define the role of deacon without detracting from wider expressions of ministry. The link between *episkopos* and *diakonos* within the early Christian communities suggests one way of avoiding this.[63] *Diakonia* can be seen to refer to commissioned activity on behalf of God, Jesus and the Body of Christ; a deacon can be seen as having a particular ecclesial relationship with the bishop and if Collins' interpretation is correct then a *diakonos*, as well as an *episkopos*,[64] remains close to the ancient calling of apostle and of the early itinerant leadership to be found in the earliest Christian communities.

The evidence above seems to point to a distinction between 'discipleship', to which all are called and for which the Spirit gives gifts/charisms to all the baptized, and 'ministry', which consists of commissioned agency to different tasks, some of which may be permanent while others are more temporary. It also points to a distinction between 'ministry', which anyone with a commissioned task might undertake, and a 'deacon', which is a specific role within the ministry of the Church. One of the problems of understanding 'ministry' in the New Testament is that then, as now, it lacked clarity. This chapter has sought to bring a certain level of clarity to a complex topic, but we cannot end without acknowledging that full consistency on the topic

cannot be achieved. *Diakonia* had a range of meanings in the first century and different Christian communities had different ideas about structures, church order and 'ministry'. The only way to achieve full consistency is to take one view of ministry and to ignore the others. While such a position might be defensible, it would not be the 'New Testament' view of ministry. That view, while untidy and hard to tie down, nevertheless speaks very clearly of the demands of Jesus, both on all who follow him in discipleship, and on those who are called to specific tasks in that following.

Chapter 3

The changing context for mission and ministry in the Church of England

1 The development of ministry in the Church of England

(a) Ministry from earliest times

As the previous chapter has argued, the evidence that we have from the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers indicates that leadership in the earliest Christian communities lay primarily with itinerant apostles, but that by the end of the first and the beginning of the second century a shift was taking place towards a more local resident leadership.

What is also clear is that during the second and third centuries a threefold pattern for this local resident leadership based on the ministry of bishops, priests and deacons became established as *the* accepted pattern throughout the Church. As the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission report *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* put it: 'During the second and third centuries, a threefold pattern of bishop, presbyter and deacon became established as the pattern of ordained ministry throughout the Church.'[1]

Although the existence of a threefold order of ministry became a fixed part of the life of the Early Church, changes continued to take place within this basic threefold pattern. To quote *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* again:

> It is important to be aware of the changes the threefold ministry has undergone in the history of the Church. In the earliest instances, where threefold ministry is mentioned, the reference is to the local eucharistic community. The bishop was the leader of the community. He was ordained and installed to proclaim the Word and preside over the celebration of the Eucharist. He was surrounded by a college of presbyters and by deacons who assisted in his tasks. In this context the bishop's ministry was a focus of unity within the whole community.
>
> Soon, however, [*BEM* went on to say] the functions were modified. Bishops began increasingly to exercise *episkope* over several local communities at the same time. In the first generation, apostles had exercised *episkope* in the wider Church. Later Timothy and Titus are recorded to have fulfilled a function of *episkope* in a given area. Later again this apostolic task is carried out in a new way by the bishops. They provide a focus of unity in life and witness within areas comprising several eucharistic communities. As a consequence, presbyters and deacons are assigned new roles. The presbyters become the leaders of the local eucharistic community, and as assistants of the bishops, deacons received responsibilities in the larger area.[2]

To fill out the picture given in this quotation, we should note that as well as the pattern in which there was one bishop with his presbyters and deacons, there was another pattern in which, alongside the core episcopal ministry exercised by the diocesan bishop, there was also an episcopal ministry exercised by other bishops under his authority. This second pattern was eventually suppressed but was then

subsequently revived in the eleventh century for pastoral and cultural reasons in the form of assistant bishops operating under the authority of the diocesan.

Although we do not have precise information about the form of ministry that existed in the earliest Christian Church in this country during the period of the Roman Empire, there is no reason to doubt that it conformed to the standard patristic threefold pattern; for example, three bishops, a priest and a deacon from the Province of Britain attended the Synod of Arles in 314.

From the evidence provided by the Venerable Bede in his *History of the English Church and People* it is also clear that this standard threefold pattern of ministry was the pattern of ministry in the *Ecclesia Anglicana* that emerged out of the fusion of the three streams of British Christianity: the Roman tradition of St Augustine and his successors, the remnants of the old Romano-British Church, and the Celtic tradition coming down from Scotland and the North of England and associated with people like St Aidan and St Cuthbert.

It is also worth noting that whereas in the churches of the Celtic tradition leadership lay with the abbots of the monasteries rather than with the bishops, this was never the case with the *Ecclesia Anglicana.* From its beginning this was an episcopally led church.

The form of threefold ministry that existed in the English Church was that of the later patristic era. As was typical in many of the churches north of the Alps, the bishops of the English Church had responsibility for dioceses that covered very large

geographical areas and as a result the leadership of the local eucharistic communities was exercised by the priests on the bishop's behalf.

Initially, ministry took place on an itinerant basis and as time went on this itinerant ministry came to be supervised by the minsters, monastic institutions that acted as centres of mission for the surrounding area. John Blair in *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* writes: if we ask: 'by what means were Christian belief and observance transmitted and fostered?' the sources we have: 'permit a fairly confident answer: priests travelled around among rural settlements, and their work was supervised by minsters'.[3]

Later still, as both the Church and the general population continued to grow, bishops (and, from the tenth century onwards, monasteries and local landowners) began to erect church buildings that served villages or a particular district within a town and these church buildings eventually replaced the minsters as the main centres for the ministerial work of the Church.

The area served by one of these buildings came to be known as a parish and each of these parishes was served by a priest (who came to be known as the incumbent) who shared with the diocesan bishop the pastoral responsibility for every person living within it.[4]

The parochial system was never the sole framework for the exercise of ministry within the English Church. The cathedrals, the monasteries, and private chapels in palaces, castles, hospitals, schools, colleges and elsewhere also provided important

centres for ministry and during the later Middle Ages an itinerant preaching ministry was exercised by the Friars, the members of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders. Nevertheless, the parochial system became the basic framework for the exercise of ministry within the English Church and this has remained the case to the present day.

The existence of these other centres of ministry meant that it was never the case that all priests were parish priests. For example, there were priests who were monks and served within a monastic community and there were priests who served as chaplains in hospitals, colleges or in royal or aristocratic households. A particular form of priestly ministry that developed during the later Middle Ages and that flourished in England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was the ministry of chantry priests. These were priests who were appointed to say Mass for the souls of the founder of the chantry and his or her family and friends, the belief being that the offering of a Mass for the repose of their souls would lessen the period they needed to spend in purgatory. Such priests also often acted as schoolmasters, curates or chaplains and would assist with the services at the parish church.

During the Middle Ages, the diaconate, which had earlier been seen as a distinctive form of ministry in its own right came to be seen primarily as a brief transitional form of ministry. As the 1988 report *Deacons in the Ministry of the Church* puts it:

> In medieval usage most ordinands remained deacon for a very short time, not more than a few weeks, before being ordained priest. When the Church laid such great emphasis on the celebration of the Mass, giving absolution after confession, and the blessing of people and objects, the priesthood was seen as the primary ministry.[5]

However, as the report goes on to say, this was not the entire picture. There were also those who remained as deacons for a long period or even permanently:

> They were persons of some importance with a specialized function which was thought difficult to combine with the full ministerial obligations of the priesthood; they were the academics who were fellows of colleges, ecclesiastical lawyers, and royal servants engaged in an onerous work of administration or diplomacy. Such deacons could be beneficed,[6] if they employed a priest to exercise the cure of souls, and they could also perform the work of an archdeacon. It was quite usual for eminent deacons to be nominated to a bishopric and to be ordained priest immediately before episcopal consecration.[7]

From the fourth century onwards the idea that bishops, priests and deacons should all be celibate became increasingly prevalent in the Western Church. In England, however, married clergy remained common throughout the Saxon period. In 1076, however, the Council of Winchester ruled that henceforth no married men were to be ordained although priests who were already married should not be compelled to dismiss their wives. At the Council of Westminster in 1102 a stricter rule was introduced and from then onwards an absolute rule of celibacy for bishops, priest and deacons became the universal the law of the English Church.

Alongside the episcopate, priesthood and diaconate there were also other forms of ministry that existed in the Saxon and mediaeval periods. There were the various forms of ministry associated with the monasteries; from the thirteenth century onwards there was the distinctive preaching ministry of the Friars; and there were the so called ‘minor orders’, which were recognized forms of ministry that ranked below

the three 'major orders' of bishops, priests and deacons.[8] These minor orders included, for example, the orders of Readers, Exorcists and Acolytes.

The office of parish clerk, an office that can be traced back to the earliest days of the English Church, was originally one of these minor orders. Parish clerks were originally ordained but non-celibate and their role was to assist the priest by serving at Mass, leading the liturgical responses and to help keep the church building and the liturgical vestments clean and in good order.

As the centuries went on, other functions were added to the parish clerk's role. It was their job, for example, to read the Epistle, to bear the holy water and the aspergillum (the tool used for sprinkling holy water) and in some places to help with the parish school. By the fourteenth century there were parish clerks who were not ordained and by the end of the century this had become the norm with office of parish clerk being seen as a form of lay ministry.[9] Sextons, laymen whose main duties were cleaning the church, ringing the church bell and digging graves, traditionally assisted the parish clerks.

Other forms of lay ministry that existed in the pre-Reformation English Church were those of church wardens [*sic*], who were responsible for ensuring that the fabric of the church was maintained and for keeping order in the church and the churchyard, and the leadership of the various funds and gilds that existed to provide votive candles before the Reserved Sacrament and the images of the saints, to provide prayers and Masses for the souls of the dead and to encourage charitable and communal activities (such as feasts on Saints' days).[10]

It can also be argued that the role of the monarch was an important form of lay ministry in the sense that the monarch was anointed at their coronation to act on behalf of God by upholding and protecting the Church and governing the country in a way that embodied the justice of God, protecting the weak and the innocent and punishing the wicked. The anointing of the monarch was seen as giving the monarchy a quasi-sacral character (an idea derived from the Old Testament: see 1 Samuel 26.9-11), but this was distinguished from ordination of bishops, priests and deacons and the monarch remained a lay figure who did not have the right to preach, to celebrate the sacraments or to grant absolution.

A final mediaeval development that needs to be noted is the extensive use that came to be made of auxiliary bishops in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The need for these auxiliary bishops reflects the fact that in the late Middle Ages diocesan bishops were normally figures with significant national responsibilities, especially at court, and that this meant that in an age of poor communications they were often absent from their dioceses.

(b) Reformation and Post-Reformation developments

The driving force behind the Reformation was the desire to remove what were seen as the corruptions that had entered into the life of the Church during the Middle Ages in order to return to the purer Christianity of the New Testament and the early Fathers.

This desire to remove mediaeval corruptions and to restore the Church's ancient purity led to significant changes in the forms of ministry to be found in the Church of

England. The abolition of the chantries and the religious orders meant that the chantry priests, the Friars and the forms of ministry associated with the monastic life ceased to exist and although the minor clerical orders below the order of deacon which had existed in the Church of England during the Middle Ages were never formally abolished they fell into disuse with one partial exception that will be noted below. In addition, the requirement that those in major orders must be celibate was abolished in 1549. The reason for this latter change was set out in Article XXXII of the Thirty-Nine Articles:

> Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

In terms of lay ministry the rejection of belief in purgatory and the prohibition of: 'relics or images, or lighting of candles, kissing, kneeling or decking of such images, or any such superstition'[11] led to the disappearance of the medieval light funds and gilds and therefore the forms of lay leadership associated with them.[12]

However, alongside these changes there were also significant elements of continuity.

First, the basic structures of the English Church, within which ministry was organized – the dioceses, archdeaconries and parishes – continued in existence, as did the cathedrals. Five new dioceses and cathedrals – Bristol, Chester, Gloucester, Oxford and Peterborough – were created, as well as a number of suffragan bishoprics which continued the pattern of auxiliary bishops inherited from the pre-reformation period.

Secondly, the three major orders of bishop, priest and deacon were retained because of a desire on the part of the English Reformers and their sixteenth and seventeenth century successors to retain those forms of ministry that could be traced back to the time of the New Testament and of the early Fathers. This desire is made explicit in the preface to the Ordinal attached to *The Book of Common Prayer*. This declares that:

> It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

and explains that the purpose of the Ordinal is to ensure that 'these Orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the Church of England'.

The reason why the English Reformers and their successors desired to retain those orders, which they believed could be traced back to the earliest days of the Church, is that they saw the retention of these orders as an integral part of the catholic continuity of the Church of England. We can see this point being made, for example, by Bishop John Jewel in his semi-official *Apology of the Church of England*, first published in 1563. Part of his argument that the Church of England is not an heretical sect, but has maintained the faith: 'confirmed by the words of Christ, by the writings of the apostles, by the testimonies of the catholic fathers, and by the examples of many ages', is the fact that the Church of England believes 'that there be divers degrees of ministers in the church, whereof some be deacons, some priests, some bishops; to whom is committed the office to instruct the people, and the whole charge and setting forth of religion'. [13]

During the second half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, however, there were an increasing number of people on the strict Protestant (Puritan) wing of the Church of England who wanted to take the Reformation further and abolish episcopacy on the grounds that bishops were not part of the pattern of ministry laid down by God in Scripture and that the bishops of the Church of England were leading the Church back towards Rome.[14] This movement to abolish bishops eventually resulted in the abolition of the episcopate by Parliament in 1646.

However, no agreement was reached on what pattern of ministry should replace the traditional threefold order and following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 the episcopate was also restored. In 1662 the position of bishops in the Church of England was further strengthened with both the Act of Uniformity and a revised Ordinal, making episcopal ordination a formal requirement for anyone who wished to exercise ordained ministry. There had been previously a few isolated examples of ministers with foreign Presbyterian orders being allowed to serve in the Church of England without being episcopally ordained.[15]

After the Reformation the tradition of having long-term or permanent deacons virtually died out.[16] Instead the deacon was (officially at least) seen as a candidate for the priesthood who was going through a year's probationary ministry as the assistant to a priest. However, because the Eucharist was celebrated only three or four times a year in parish churches and the ministry of confession was widely disused, deacons were quite frequently appointed as the incumbents of parishes until this practice was outlawed by the Act of Uniformity of 1662.

After 1662 the requirement that deacons should serve a full year in the diaconate came to be widely disregarded, with deacons being ordained as priests within a few weeks of their ordination as deacons (or even on the same day) so that they could be appointed to the sole charge of a parish, either as the incumbent or as an assistant curate serving an absent incumbent.

Thirdly, as we have said, the minor orders of the mediaeval Church generally fell into disuse in the Church of England after the Reformation. However, one of these orders, the office of Reader, which, like the three ordained ministries, dated back to the earliest days of the Christian Church,[17] briefly re-emerged as a form of lay ministry.

At the accession of Elizabeth I in 1559 the Church of England faced an acute shortage of ordained ministers, mainly due to a fall off in the numbers of candidates coming forward for ordination in the period of uncertainty following the breach with Rome, but also partly because of the refusal of two hundred of the Marian parish clergy to conform to the new settlement of religion and because the Reformation emphasis on having an educated clergy capable of preaching (in contrast to what were seen as the ill-educated 'Mass priests' of the pre-Reformation period) meant that suitable candidates for the ministry were initially harder to find.

The response of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, to this crisis was twofold. He and his fellow bishops carried out large numbers of ordinations and from 1560 onwards Readers were appointed to serve in parishes that were without the services of an ordained minister ('cures now destitute'). It seems probable that the reason why it was Readers who were employed in this way was that the bishops were

aware of the fact that office of Reader was one that had existed in the early days of the Church. As in the case of its pattern of ordained ministry, the Church of England was seeking to build on ancient precedent.

The Readers who were appointed in this way are referred to as 'sober, honest and grave' laymen and, according to a set of Injunctions issued sometime between 1561 and 1562, the new Readers were to dress soberly, especially in church, to use their influence on behalf of peace, and not to give occasion of offence and to read daily one chapter from the Old Testament and one from the New, with a view to increasing their own knowledge.

The ministerial tasks they were permitted to perform were:

- to read whatever was appointed by authority and to conduct service in church;
- to bury the dead;
- to church women;
- To keep registers.

However, they were forbidden to preach or to interpret the Scriptures or to minister the sacraments.

These Readers were appointed and licensed by the Bishops, and they were full time and stipendiary, but they were temporary office-holders who had to give up their post if a new incumbent was appointed to their parish.

As the shortage of clergy began to ease and the vacant parishes were filled the need for Readers ceased to exist so they gradually ceased to function or be appointed

although there is evidence that there were still Readers functioning in the Lake District as late as 1745 and Readers continued to function in the English colonies in North America.

Fourthly, the lay ministries of parish clerks, church wardens and sextons also survived the Reformation. The ministries exercised by church wardens and sextons remained unchanged, while the role of the parish clerk lost the liturgical roles associated with Mass, but retained the liturgical role of leading the responses and singing of the people.

The pre-Reformation understanding of the monarch's role as a form of ministry exercised on behalf of God was also retained and in fact attained a higher profile through the increased emphasis that was placed on the role of the monarch as the Church's Supreme Governor. However, it is important to note that a clear distinction was made between the form of ministry exercised by the monarch and that exercised by those who were ordained. This is a point that is made clear in Article XXXVII:

> Where we attribute to the Queen's Majesty the chief government, by which Titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folk to be offended; we give not to our Princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the sacraments, the which thing the Injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our Queen do most plainly testify: but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy Scriptures by God himself: that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword, the stubborn and evil-doers.

(c) Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century developments

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were a series of factors that led to the development or reinvigoration of ministry within the Church of England.

First, there was a big overall increase in the population and the development of new centres of population, particularly, though not exclusively, in the Midlands and the North of England. This put great strain on a diocesan and parochial system that had been shaped by the population patterns of earlier centuries.

Secondly, there was a growing concern, which was stimulated by the religious census of 1851, that a large sector of the population was alienated from both the Church of England and Christianity in general.

Thirdly, during the first half of the nineteenth century there was strong social and political pressure for the Church of England to use its historic resources in order to provide ministry on a more efficient, up-to-date and rational basis. These pressures were reflected in the establishment by Parliament in 1836 of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, a body consisting of bishops and laity, which was responsible for the reorganization of diocesan and cathedral finances with surplus funds being used 'for the cure of souls in parishes where such assistance is most required'.

Fourthly, the Evangelical revival from the 1740s onwards and the Catholic revival from the 1830s onwards both encouraged the development of new ways of exercising ministry that would be more effective in evangelism and the provision of pastoral care.

Fifthly, the early and mid nineteenth century saw what Arthur Burns has called the 'Diocesan Revival'.[18] This was a cumulative movement that had its roots in the attempt by bishops in the eighteenth century to overhaul the management of their dioceses and that resulted in the nineteenth century in the major programmes of diocesan reform undertaken by bishops such as Charles Blomfield (Bishop successively of Chester and London), Edward Stanley (Bishop of Norwich) and Samuel Wilberforce (Bishop successively of Oxford and Winchester). Integral to these reforms were the reform, invigoration and development of ministry within their dioceses.

In order to cope with the changes in population described above, the Church of England's traditional territorial pattern of ministry was extended by the creation of new dioceses and parishes. During the nineteenth century the dioceses of Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Ripon and Leeds, St Albans, Southwell, Truro, and Wakefield were created, along with the suffragan bishoprics of Dover, Nottingham, Bedford, and Colchester, which were a deliberate revival of the pattern of suffragan bishoprics which had been created by Henry VIII but which had ceased to exist by the end of the sixteenth century..

In the same period hundreds of parishes were created. Under Acts of Parliament passed in 1818 and 1821–2 new parishes were established, and church buildings were erected in parishes that had too many people living in them to operate effectively. 'The following thirty years saw 612 new parishes defined and nearly 2,000 new

churches built, with the emphasis being on the areas of greatest need in Yorkshire, Lancashire and the suburbs of London.'[19]

A good example of what this meant in a particular locality is what took place in Leeds. After Walter Hook became Vicar of Leeds in 1837 he addressed the issue of ministering to its rapidly growing population both by rebuilding Leeds Parish Church so that it could seat 1,600 people, and by dividing the old Leeds parish into twenty-one new parishes, each with its own member of the clergy and its own church building.

Alongside this increase in the number of dioceses and parishes there was also a big increase in clergy numbers, which rose from 16,194 to 23,670 between 1851 and 1901.[20]

What lay behind this increase in dioceses, parishes and clergy numbers was the conviction, shared across all forms of churchmanship, that dioceses and parishes needed to be small enough to enable the bishops and the parochial clergy to exercise an effective pastoral ministry among the people committed to their care.

This in turn was linked to the recovery of the idea that a bishop should be a real 'Father in God' who knew and was known by the clergy and people of his diocese and exercised a ministry involving both effective diocesan administration and pastoral care. An important aspect of the increased pastoral activity of the bishops was an increase in the regularity of confirmations and the attempt to make these occasions when the bishops could meet with the candidates and lay hands on them individually

in contrast with the rather impersonal mass confirmations that had tended to take place previously.

It was the idea that bishops should be able to be in regular contact with their clergy and laity that lay behind the revival of suffragan bishoprics just referred to, with the intention that suffragan bishops should provide additional episcopal ministry in dioceses that were too large for the diocesan bishop to minister effectively to everyone in his diocese or, in the case of the Diocese of Canterbury, where the national responsibilities of the diocesan bishop made this impossible. During the course of the last two centuries this pattern of suffragan bishops assisting the ministry of the diocesan bishops spread across most of the dioceses of the Church of England and eventually led to the development of formal or informal area schemes whereby the diocesan bishop delegated responsibility for the exercise of episcopal ministry in a particular part of his diocese to a suffragan (e.g. the area schemes in the dioceses of London and Oxford).

It was also felt that effective ministry required resident clergy and to this end the requirement was introduced that the parochial clergy must live in their parishes. Together with the increase in clergy numbers, the idea behind this reform was that there should be a resident Church of England priest in every parish.

It has been argued that a further development that took place in the nineteenth century was the 'professionalization' of the clergy. It is claimed that, during the nineteenth century, being a member of the clergy came to be seen as a profession (like being a doctor or a lawyer), with professional training being provided by the newly

established theological colleges, increased expectations with regards to standards of competence and conduct, and other characteristics of professionalization such as: 'expulsion procedures; retirement arrangements; professional organizations; professional journals'.[21]

However, this argument has been challenged on the grounds that although the development that is described certainly took place, the concept of professionalization was rarely used during the nineteenth century and that changes that are characterized as evidence of professionalization were not modelled on developments in other professions but were inspired by a desire to be faithful to biblical principles and/or a desire to emulate the practice of the Early Church or the Church of the Middle Ages.

Alongside the development of initial ministerial training at theological college, the nineteenth century also saw the development of the curacy in its modern sense of a number of years of continuing ministerial training subsequent to ordination in which a new member of the clergy gains ministerial experience under the supervision of an experienced parish priest. In this context the practice of new clergy serving a year as deacons became practically universal and the diaconate came to be seen primarily as a probationary ministry which new curates undertook for a year before they went on to be ordained as priests.

In one sense this meant that the significance of the diaconate was heightened in that it now played a clearly defined part in the professional development of the clergy. In another sense, though, it was weakened in that the idea that the diaconate was simply

a transitional ministry exercised by those who were intending to become priests, rather than a distinctive and permanent ministry in its own right, was reinforced.

In larger parishes groups of unmarried assistant curates might live together in a clergy house, dividing the parish between them for the purposes of parochial visiting and taking particular responsibility for any mission chapels that existed alongside the main parish church.

In addition to the developments previously described, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries also saw significant developments in lay ministry within the Church of England.

Although, as we have noted, the officer of Reader in its Elizabethan form gradually faded from the picture this did not mean that lay ministry ceased to exist in the Church of England. From the second half of the eighteenth century onwards informal lay ministry became an increasingly important part of the life of the Church of England (the use of lay preachers in the Methodist movement was part of a much wider trend) and when the Convocations of Canterbury and York began to meet once again from 1854 and 1861 respectively the use of 'lay agency' in the ministry of the Church was an important topic for discussion.

What emerged out of the discussion of lay agency were two developments in formally recognized lay ministry that have been an integral part of the ministry of the Church of England ever since.

First, the office of Reader was re-instituted from 1866 onwards with Readers being commissioned:

- to render general aid to the clergy in all ministrations not strictly requiring the aid of one in Holy Orders;
- to read the lessons in church;
- to read prayers and Holy Scripture, and to explain the same in such places as the bishop's commission shall define.

Secondly, in 1882 the Church Army was founded by Wilson Carlisle as a voluntary association of lay evangelists that provided an Anglican alternative to the work of the Salvation Army.

Furthermore during the nineteenth century there were many lay workers who were neither Readers nor Church Army officers but whose work received some form of recognition and authorization at the parochial level.

Two further nineteenth-century developments that need to be noted were the re-emergence of the monastic vocation and the growth of formally recognized ministries for women.

In the nineteenth century religious communities were reintroduced into the Church of England as part of the Catholic Revival in the Church of England that resulted from the Oxford Movement. In 1841 two women took vows and in 1863 an Anglican Benedictine monastery for men was opened. From these small beginnings the number

of religious communities grew throughout the rest of the century, providing a distinctive and important new form of ministerial vocation, particularly for women whose sphere of service might other wise have been restricted to the home.

Although the numbers of those in religious communities fell significantly during the second half of the twentieth century, there are still some twelve hundred men and women, both lay and ordained, in over forty communities and they continue to play an important role in the life of the Church, both through their basic ministry of maintaining a regular pattern of worship and through other forms of ministry including education, nursing, and the offering of retreats and other forms of spiritual direction.

In terms of formally recognized ministries for women in the wider Church of England, the order of deaconesses came into existence in 1861 and by the end of the century there were also other forms of women's ministry recognized by the Church such as the work of parochial women missioners and Church Army sisters.[22] In addition lay women had a very significant role in running small-scale local charities, in undertaking parish visiting, in teaching in Sunday schools and Church schools and in maintaining the network of social relief agencies that preceded the development of the modern welfare state.

What all these developments meant was that by the end of the nineteenth century, although there were parishes, particularly in rural areas, in which the focus of ministry was a single parish priest, there were many other parishes, particularly in urban areas, in which there were what we would now call ministerial teams made up of the

incumbent, one or more curates, a deaconess or a nun and a variety of other paid or unpaid lay workers.

The missionary movement

Although the two oldest Church of England mission agencies, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel were founded in 1699 and 1701 respectively, the missionary movement started to become a significant part of the life of the Church of England from the end of the eighteenth century onwards.

Since then, although the work of the missionary movement has not led directly to a change in the polity of the Church of England, it has nevertheless had an important indirect influence on the development of ministry in the Church of England in three ways.

First, it has raised awareness of the centrality of mission for the life of the Church and this has helped to shape the development of Church of England thinking about ministry.

Secondly, it has pioneered new ways of undertaking ministry outside the established structures of the Church of England and this has led people to think about new ways of undertaking ministry in the Church of England itself.

Thirdly, it has provided opportunities for the exercise of ministry by lay people, including women, in a way that became a model for subsequent developments within the Church of England itself. For example, although women in the mission field often

faced the same sort of restrictions on their exercise of ministry as women in England did, the mission field also provided women with opportunities for the exercise of evangelistic and teaching ministries that were not available at home and their successful exercise of these ministries was one of the factors that eventually led to the ordination of women in the Church of England. [23]

(d) Twentieth-century developments

The twentieth century continued to see significant developments in the patterns of both ordained and lay ministry within the Church of England.

Ordained ministry

First of all, in the twentieth century the Church of England continued to uphold the historic pattern of dioceses and parishes as the basic framework for the exercise of ministry. It also continued the nineteenth-century practice of creating new dioceses and parishes in order to continue to minister effectively in the face of the continuing growth of the population. However, there was a significant drop in the number of ordained ministers available to serve in these new dioceses and parishes.

The creation of new dioceses such as, for example, the Diocese of Derby (created in 1927) and of new suffragan bishoprics (such as the suffragan bishopric of Repton within the diocese of Derby) meant that the twentieth century saw a steady increase in the number of bishops in the Church of England. However, in spite of the creation of a large number of new parishes, in contrast to the nineteenth century there was overall a steady decline in the number of ordained ministers in the Church of England.

From a high point of over 23,000 active and retired clergy in 1901 the number of the clergy continued to fall steadily with only 9,762 full-time stipendiary clergy at work in the dioceses by 1999.[24] To get a complete picture it is also important to remember that active retired clergy and self-supporting clergy need to be added to the 1999 figures, but even when these are added in it seems clear that the number of ordained ministers at work in the Church of England fell by approximately 50% during the course of the last century.

Some of the main consequences of this fall in clergy numbers were:

- The ratio of clergy to population moved from 1 : 1,570 in 1901 to 1 : 5,160 in 1999.
- An increasing number of parishes in both rural and urban areas were grouped together with other parishes and ceased to have their own resident ordained minister.
- Assistant stipendiary clergy (whether senior or curates) became increasingly scarce.[25] This meant that that the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century model of parishes having teams of curates had vanished by the end of the twentieth century.[26]

Secondly, there was a growth in the number of clergy serving as either full time or part time chaplains.

Since the Second World War there has been a large expansion of chaplaincy provision. Today chaplains are to be found working in a wide variety of institutions and sectors. Chaplains serve in schools, armed forces, hospitals

and hospices, prisons, universities, arts and recreation, legal services, police forces, airports, agriculture, retail trade and commercial seafaring. The largest provision is in the sectors of healthcare, universities, prisons and armed forces.[27]

The statistics for 2005 on the Church of England website list 1,628 Church of England clergy under 'Chaplaincy and other ministries', a figure which excludes parochial and other clergy who serve as chaplains part time.[28] The comparable figures for 2002 and 2004 were 1,159 and 1,238 respectively.

Thirdly, from the 1970s an increasing number of the clergy were self-supporting,[29] receiving expenses but no stipend. By the end of the century approximately a third of all ordinations were of people entering into self-supporting ministry.

Two patterns of self-supporting ministry developed during the twentieth century:

- The first pattern, which emerged during the 1960s was, officially at least, like stipendiary ministry in all respects other than the lack of a stipend[30] and was nationally deployable.

  One distinctive form of this type of self-supporting ministry was Ministry in Secular Employment (MSE). The distinctive thing about MSE ministers was that, while they are ordained to a parish, they were ordained on the understanding that the primary focus of their ministry would be their place of work. They saw their ministry as being about 'the Church – in the person of its ordained clergy – supporting the laity at work, or remaining, perhaps

permanently, in environments where there may be no Christians. The MSE's daily environment is "other peoples' territory," often alien and hostile.'[31]

- The second pattern, which emerged during the 1980s, was Ordained Local Ministry (OLM). OLM ministers are 'priests or deacons called by, and from within, their local community, who hold the bishop's licence to serve specifically within and for that local community in the context of a local ministry team'.[32]

Although OLM ministers were ordained into the ministry of the Church Catholic like all other Church of England clergy, they were not intended to be nationally deployable:

> After ordination, ordained local ministers hold the bishop's licence, which relates the holder specifically to ministry within a designated parish or group of parishes and is for a set period of years in the first instance, renewable thereafter as the bishop considers appropriate. Ordained local ministers are not deployed outside their own local community, however, that may be defined.[33]

Fourthly, women were ordained as deacons from 1987 and as priests from 1994.[34] This development resulted in rapid influx of women into the ranks of the Church of England's ordained ministry. By 2000 almost 12% of the ordained clergy were women, with 1,796 female priests, of whom 1,068 were stipendiary.[35] However, opposition to women priests remained constant with 15–20% of the Church of England continuing to be opposed for various reasons[36] and provision was made for Parochial Church Councils to pass resolutions declaring that they could not accept a woman presiding at Holy Communion or being their incumbent. The ordination of

women as deacons and priests also meant that by the end of the century the order of deaconesses had almost died out.

Fifthly, a small but growing number of people were ordained as permanent deacons. By the end of the century there were approximately seventy-five permanent or 'distinctive' deacons in the Church of England, of whom two-thirds were women. There were two reasons for this development. First, there were those who felt called to a distinctive diaconal ministry which they saw as a particularly well suited to establishing links between the Church and the wider world. Secondly, there were a number of women who felt called to ordained ministry but on theological grounds did not believe that it was right for them to be priests.[37]

Sixthly, provision was made for greater sharing of ordained ministry with other churches under the 'ecumenical canons'. In particular, under Canon B 44 ordained ministers from other churches could minister in Local Ecumenical Partnerships. Thus for the first time ministers of churches with whom the Church of England did not have an interchangeable ministry, and who were not episcopally ordained, were able to minister in Church of England parishes on a regular basis, in some cases acting as their normal minister.

Lay ministry

The seventh development was the growth of authorized lay ministries. While the number of clergy declined during the twentieth century, the number of people involved in lay ministry increased so that by the end of the century there were over 10,000 Readers, which meant that there were more Readers than there were stipendiary clergy.[38]

The growth in lay ministry was partly due to the need to fill the gap left by the declining number of clergy, but also (and more importantly) it was due to the growing theological conviction across all the churches that ministry was the responsibility of the whole people of God and not simply the responsibility of those who were ordained. *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry* stated:

> The Holy Spirit bestows on the community diverse and complementary gifts. These are for the common good of the whole people and are manifested in acts of service within the community and to the world. They may be gifts of communicating the Gospel in word and deed, gifts of healing, gifts of praying, gifts of teaching and learning, gifts of serving, gifts of guiding and following, gifts of inspiration and vision. All members are called to discover, with the help of the community, the gifts they have received and to use them for the building up of the Church and for the service of the world to which the Church is sent.[39]

By the end of the century a large number of different forms of lay ministry had developed in the Church of England. A helpful way of beginning to get to grips with the differences between them is to distinguish between those forms of ministry that had national authorization, those that had diocesan authorization, and those that were authorized at the parochial level.

Nationally recognized lay ministries

There were three nationally authorized patterns of lay ministry. As well as the ministries of Readers and Church Army officers, which we have already noted, there was the ministry of Accredited Lay Workers who were authorized to serve as lay workers under Canons E 7 and E 8.[40] The ministry of Readers, Church Army officers,

and Accredited Lay Workers was recognized across the Church of England as a whole and was therefore transferable across the dioceses with candidates for these ministries selected and trained according to nationally agreed criteria.

Ministries with diocesan authorization

There were four types of ministry with diocesan authorization:

- The first of these was the ministry of churchwardens who, under the terms of Canon E 1 are officers of the diocesan bishop.
- The second was the ministry of those who under the terms of Canon B 12(3) are authorized by the bishop to 'distribute the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper'.
- The third was specific diocesan ministries such as those generically referred to as 'pastoral assistants'. Those in this category were known variously as 'pastoral auxiliaries', 'lay pastors' and 'parish assistants'. Some dioceses also authorized other areas of ministry such as evangelism or children's work.
- The fourth consisted of those who were part of local ministry teams, but who were not Ordained Local Ministers (OLMs) or Readers.

These ministries did not involve any form of nationally agreed selection or training, except for the fact that under the Churchwardens (Appointment and Resignation) Measure 1964, churchwardens had to be chosen by the joint consent of the minister of the parish and a meeting of the parishioners.

For the other ministries involved, the criteria for selection and training were instead set by the diocese involved. The scope of ministry that was anticipated, and the extent of training for it, varied enormously from diocese to diocese.[41]

Such ministries were not transferable between dioceses.

Another form of ministry, that could be said to come under this category, was that of lay mission partners from mission agencies, such as CMS and Crosslinks, working with different communities in this country. They were appointed following agreement between the diocese and parish(es) involved and the mission agency concerned and there might well have been some form of diocesan authorization as well.

Ministries with parochial authorization

There were also a number of different types of ministry that had a purely parochial authorization in the sense that the people involved were authorized to act by a local parish or group of parishes rather than by the diocese or by the Church of England nationally.

Such ministries included the ministries of:

- sidesmen or assistants to the churchwardens, a ministry that was authorized at the parochial level, even though the rules for appointment and the duties involved were laid down nationally by Canon E 2;
- youth and children's workers;
- Evangelists;

- Community Workers and Community Development Workers;
- parish administrators;
- choirmasters or Worship Leaders;
- young people working with schemes such as Time for God or Oasis;
- House Group, Cell Group or Alpha Group leaders.

Those involved in such ministries might have received some form of episcopal commissioning, but they would not have been formally authorized at a diocesan level, and their recognition would not have been transferable outside the parish or parishes involved.

The fact that the term 'Evangelist' has been used with reference to national, diocesan, and parochial forms of lay ministry means that the use of the term in the Church of England requires a brief explanation at this point.

Church Army officers are admitted to the nationally recognized office of Evangelist. In the Diocese of Rochester there is also a Diocesan Fellowship of Evangelists, the members of which receive training and authorization at the diocesan level.[42] In a number of parishes there are people who are authorized to undertake evangelistic activity in their local area. Finally, there are those who engage in a ministry of evangelism and in that sense can be called evangelists even if they are not formally authorized to act as such, or are officially authorized to perform some other form of ministry such as, for example, being a priest.

The College of Evangelists is different again:

> The national College of Evangelists was founded in 1999 to support and give the accreditation of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to evangelists in the Church of England. To qualify, evangelists will be involved in evangelistic missions (not just training or teaching about evangelism) and will be operating nationally or regionally.[43]

It is impossible to give a precise description of the activities that the various forms of lay ministry involved by the end of the twentieth century, because these varied according to the type of lay ministry concerned and the particular circumstances in which a particular form of ministry was exercised.

However, it is possible to give a general list of the kind of activities in which lay ministers were involved, and this list includes the following:

- conducting Morning and Evening Prayer, A Service of the Word and other non-sacramental services;
- preaching;
- reading the Epistle and the Gospel;
- leading the people in prayer;
- administering the elements at the Eucharist and leading Holy Communion by extension;
- leading the music for services and training singers and musicians;
- reading the banns of marriage;
- visiting the bereaved and taking funerals;
- evangelism;
- leading home groups;

- church administration;
- pastoral visiting;
- pastoral counselling;
- marriage and baptism preparation;
- children and young people's work;
- hospital and prison chaplaincy;
- working with the elderly;
- working with the unemployed, the homeless and refugees.

What all these developments in regard to ordained and lay ministry meant was not that the twentieth century moved from a clerically based form of ministry at the start of the twentieth century to a collaborative form of ministry involving both clergy and laity at the end of it. As we have seen, lay ministry was already flourishing by the end of the nineteenth century, as were what we would now call ministerial teams made up of both clergy and laity.

What they did mean was that far fewer parishes had their own residential stipendiary clergy and that ministry teams increasingly consisted of a mixture of stipendiary and self-supporting clergy alongside a greater variety of forms of authorized lay ministry. There was also a greater emphasis on ministry as the responsibility of the whole people of God with the members of the ministry team being seen as being there to give leadership and support to the ministries exercised by everyone else.

In the first five years of the twenty-first century these twentieth-century developments have continued to shape ministry in the Church of England. Broadly speaking, we are

where we were when the old century ended and is not yet clear how the need for fresh expressions of Church that we will look at below will affect the way that the Church of England's ministry is exercised or the form(s) that this ministry will take.

There has, however, been one new development that needs to be noted. This is the emergence of ordained pioneer ministry as a recognized focus of ministry. Ordained pioneer ministers are ministers who, in addition to possessing the normal qualities required of ordained ministers: 'have the necessary vision and gifts to be missionary entrepreneurs: to lead fresh expressions of church and forms of church appropriate to a particular culture' and whose selection, training and deployment will take place with the view to their exercising this type of ministry.[44] Candidates for this type of ministry began to be selected from October 2005 onwards and there are 26 of them in training at the time of writing.

2 Changes in British society

In order to think responsibly about ministry in the Church of England it is not sufficient merely to know about changes that have taken place within the Church. We also have to understand the changes that have taken place in wider society.

This is because, if ministry exists in order to further the mission of the Church, it follows that the form of ministry takes will need to relate to the requirements of mission and to understand the requirements of mission we need to understand the society in which mission is taking place.

Although no one would deny that huge changes have taken place in British society over the past century, the precise nature of those changes is still a matter for debate among historians and sociologists. However, there are four clear results of these that have direct relevance to the mission of the Church.

The first three results are helpfully summarized in Chapter 1 of *Mission-shaped Church*:

- First, society is becoming increasingly fragmented.

People who have had a longer education are more likely to live away from their parents, and are more likely to be civically engaged (i.e. involved in community groups or local politics). People who are from the manual sections of the community are more likely to live near family and less likely to join local groups. Young adults may not join local groups, but will have an active friendship network. In any particular town there are many people who will never meet, even though they live nearby. They get into a car to travel to see the people they know and so do not meet the people who live close to them.

When they do have time, those who live away from their relatives, or who have children who live with ex-spouses, will visit them. People no longer view Sunday as special, or as 'church time'. Children are much more likely to be playing sport than being in Sunday school or church.[45]

- Secondly, people increasingly relate to each other through membership of particular networks rather than because they live in the same geographical community.

This means that community and a sense of community are often disconnected from locality and geography. A typical town will have an array of networks. Each school will have a network of the parents whose children attend it, as well as networks of the children themselves. Each workplace will have its own networks, according to who works with whom, and these networks may spread to key suppliers or clients of the firm. Some of the networks may be based upon a locality, particularly among poorer people who are less mobile. For example, the residents of a social housing scheme may still have a network based on where they live, as well as reaching out to their local relatives. The neighbouring private housing estate may have no such local network, and a person moving there may find it hard to meet people until they go to the group that is the heart of a network, such as a Baby and Toddler group in the town. Another network in the town may revolve around the nightclub, or the Working Men's Club. Of course, any one person may be in several networks, but some people will now be in none – due to the collapse of the neighbourhood as a friendship base.[46]

- Thirdly, our society has moved from being based around production to being based around consumption.

Where previous generations found their identity in what they produced, we now find our identity in what we consume. We have moved from a society that shaped its members primarily as producers – those who believed in progress and in producing

something that contributed to the better life that was certain to come through education and hard work – to a society that shapes its members first and foremost by the need to play the role of consumer.[47]

One of the things that has been affected by this move to a consumer culture is the way that people think about matters of truth and the ways in which people evaluate truth claims. The way people think about shopping also becomes the way people think about 'truth':

> When many voices can be heard, who can say that one should be heeded more than another? . . . When the only criteria for choosing between them are learned in the marketplace, then truth appears as a commodity. We hear people 'buy into' a belief or, rather than rejecting a dogma as false, they say they 'cannot buy' this or that viewpoint.[48]

- A fourth and related result of the changes that have taken place in British society is the prevailing emphasis on the freedom and autonomy of the individual, an emphasis that can be seen as the philosophical version of the consumer culture. As the Doctrine Commission report *The Mystery of Salvation* notes:

  > In our post modern culture self-fulfilment has become a matter of individually self-chosen goals. Freedom – in the sense of the absolute autonomy of the individual – has become the single, overarching ideal to which all other goals are subordinated. I must be free to be whoever I chose to be and pursue whatever good I choose for myself. There must be no normative goals, models or ideals for which I should aim.

> The point is not simply that there are no such normative goals, but that there must be none, if I am to be truly free to be myself – to be the self I chose to make myself.[49]

What has both reflected and contributed to these changes has been the revolution in Information Technology that has taken place over the last twenty years. In particular, ready and widespread access to unofficial sources of information and opinion via the Internet and the capacity that now exists to form networked communities via the Internet to share knowledge and other practices in this 'virtual' way has helped to reinforce the wider revolt against institutional control, order, authorization and boundaries.

The reason that these results of social change matter for the Church of England is that, as *Mission-shaped Church* puts it, the emergence of a network and consumer society rooted in an emphasis on personal autonomy has led to the demise of the Christian culture that used to provide the framework for British society.

Mission-shaped Church quotes Callum Brown:

> What is taking place is not merely the continued decline of organized Christianity, but the death of the culture that formerly conferred Christian identity upon the British people as a whole. If a core identity survives for Britons, it is certainly no longer Christian. The culture of Christianity has gone in the Britain of the new millennium.

It then comments:

> The Christian story is no longer at the heart of the nation. Although people may identify themselves as 'Christian' in the national census, for the majority that does not involve belonging to a worshipping community, or any inclination that it should. Many people have no identifiable religious interest or expression. Among some young people there is little evidence of any belief in a transcendent dimension. During the twentieth century Sunday school attendance dropped from 55 per cent to 4 per cent of children, meaning that even the rudiments of the Christian story and of Christian experience are lacking in most young people. Our multicultural and multi-faith society reinforces a consumerist view that faith and their differences are simply issues of personal choice, to be decided on the basis of what 'works' or makes you happy.

For the Church of England, which has been used to operating on the basis of having a recognized role in a traditionally Christian society, the consequences of these changes are acute:

> The Church of England bases a significant part of its identity on its physical presence in every society, and on a 'come to us' strategy. But as community becomes more complex, mere geographical presence is no longer a guarantee that we can connect. The reality is that mainstream culture no longer brings people to the church door. We can no longer assume that we can automatically reproduce ourselves, because the pool of people who regard church as relevant or important is decreasing with every generation.[50]

There are those who would argue that the bleak view of the religious state of Britain put forward by Brown and reflected in the previous quotation ignores other evidence that points to the continuing importance of religion and of Britain's Christian heritage.

Duncan MacLaren, for example, drawing on a number of different surveys of British beliefs and attitudes, declares that

> contrary to sociological predictions of inexorable decline, it seems that the last two decades of the twentieth century have seen 'stable religion' across certain indicators . . . Some beliefs have remained stable (God as personal, God as spirit or life force, heaven), while others have increased considerably (hell, life after death). Likewise, some indicators of religious disposition have not changed for a generation (again, God as personal, prayer and meditation). Similarly, on some issues an increasing proportion of the British express confidence in the church (moral problems, spiritual problems).

He notes that:

> It is easy to miss these stubborn outcrops of religion in modernity in amongst the prophecies of statistical gloom that are frequently applied to other indicators, such as churchgoing. Yet they are there, and they belong to the picture of religion in Britain just as much as the other indicators. It is important that these stubborn outcrops of religion in modernity are acknowledged, otherwise, as I suggested above, the rumour of secular society becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.[51]

In a well-known phrase, Grace Davie has described this phenomenon of the persistence of belief in an age of low church attendance as 'believing without belonging'.[52]

Drawing on the work of Martyn Percy, MacLaren also draws attention to the idea of 'resilient religion', the idea that religious and specifically Christian ideas may be part

of the cultural fabric of society even when they are not consciously noted or acknowledged. 'Resilient religion is embedded within European culture – or cultures – in a number of ways, Christian symbols, language, rituals, art, music, politics, and styles of thinking are all buried deep in its strata.'[53]

The importance of resilient religion is that it may provide a latent cultural memory of the Christian faith with which the proclamation of the Christian gospel may be able to connect. In the words of Lynda Barley: 'The Christian heart of Britain remains, in spite of selective evidence in recent years to the contrary, and the challenge to the churches is to make this a more active reality for the twenty-first century.'[54]

These qualifications notwithstanding, it remains the case that there would be general agreement about the fact that the mission of the Church now has to take place in an increasingly difficult cultural climate. The title of MacLaren's book, *Mission Implausible*, is meant to convey that engaging in Christian mission means swimming against the cultural tide, since the way that British culture has developed means that while religious belief and interest in spirituality may continue to flourish, the claims of orthodox Christianity appear culturally alien and therefore implausible to an increasing number of people in today's society.

Furthermore, even where people do hold to some latent or inchoate form of Christian belief this does not necessarily mean that they will be willing to commit themselves to active membership of the Christian Church. This is for two reasons identified by Grace Davie in her 'From obligation to Consumption: Understanding the Patterns of Religion in Northern Europe'.

The first reason is the existence of what Davie calls 'vicarious religion', which she defines as 'religion performed by an active minority on behalf of a much larger number'. In specific terms what this means, she says, is that across Northern Europe

- Churches and church leaders perform ritual on behalf of others (e.g. at the time of a birth, a marriage, a divorce even, and above all at the time of a death). European populations are offended if these 'services' are denied.
- Church leaders and churchgoers believe on behalf of other. It is quite clear, for example, that church leaders should not doubt in public and will get into trouble if they do.
- Church leaders and churchgoers embody moral codes on behalf of others. Religious professionals are expected to maintain moral standards in their private as well as public lives – a situation that imposes heavy burdens on the families of those in ministry.
- Rather more provocatively, churches can offer space for the vicarious debate of unresolved issues in modern societies: the current debate about homosexuality in the Anglican Communion offers a good example. Without such an explanation, it would be much harder to discover why the secular press pays such close attention to the discussion about senior appointments in a supposedly marginal institution.[55]

The phenomenon of vicarious religion is particularly strong in the Nordic countries, but it also exists in Britain and means in practice that people are glad that the

Christian Church is there and expect its services to be available to them, but do not feel any personal obligation to live a life of committed Christian discipleship. Living the Christian life is something that is done by other people on their behalf.

The point just noted, that people do not feel under any obligation to live a life of Christian discipleship, brings us to the second reason why people are unwilling to commit themselves to active membership of the Church. As we have already noted, ours is now a consumer society where what individuals do is increasingly governed by personal choice. Davie argues that this situation is reflected in terms of religion by

> a gradual shift away from an understanding of religion as a form of obligation and towards to an increasing emphasis on consumption. In other words, what until moderately recently was simply imposed (with all the negative connotations of this word), or inherited (a rather more positive spin) becomes instead a matter of personal choice. I go to church (or to another religious organization) because I want to, maybe for a short period or maybe for longer, to fulfil a particular rather than a general need in my life and where I will continue my attachment so long as it provides what I want, but I have no *obligation* either to attend in the first place or to continue if I don't want to.[56]

This means that active membership of the Church is not a default option imposed by membership of society. It is something that an individual will choose or not choose for themselves and the prevailing cultural climate makes this a choice that it is more difficult for them to make, given all the options that are open to them in contemporary society and all the other demands on their time.

The fact that the Church of England is the established Church in this country means that it has a higher public profile than the other churches and provides a particularly strong focus for vicarious religion. These facts mean that the Church of England is in a potentially strong position to communicate and connect with the people of this country.

However, the established position of the Church of England also creates it own barrier to plausibility given the widespread suspicion of established institutions that is a feature of contemporary British society. The fact that the Church of England is an institution with a long history that has traditionally played a key role in the life of the nation gives it continuing influence in our society, but the fact that it is therefore viewed as part of the 'establishment' also means that it attracts a lot of negative comment in a way that other religious bodies do not and this makes its missionary task more difficult.

3 Mission in contemporary society

A feature of the life of the Church of England that can be traced at least a far back as the 1945 report *Towards the Conversion of England*,[57] and that has become increasingly important in recent years and lies behind the largely positive reception given to *Mission-shaped Church*, has been a growing recognition of the responsibility of the Church of England for mission and evangelism in this country.[58]

The recognition that the Church of England has this responsibility has led in turn to a debate about how this responsibility may best be discharged. Given the social changes

identified in the previous section of this chapter, what can best be done to help make the Christian faith plausible for people today?

Just as there is continuing debate about the changes that have taken place in British society, so also there is continuing debate among missiologists about the best way to undertake mission within it. However, there appears to be a general consensus amongst missiologists about a number of issues.

The first point of consensus is that while the verbal proclamation and defence of the intellectual truth of the Christian message are a necessary part of mission,[59] they are not necessarily the best place to start. The key reason why this is the case is that in the post-modern consumer society we now inhabit claims to be declaring the truth about the human condition are regarded with widespread suspicion in the same way that we regard with suspicion advertisers and other people who are trying to 'sell' us things.

As Graham Tomlin argues in *The Provocative Church*, what this means is that people will only take Christian truth claims seriously if they can be seen to be embodied in a plausible fashion in the life of the Christian community. He notes that is our society claims to possess truth are often seen as being 'a mere front for power games' and this means that the connection between a truth claim and the kind of living that emerges from is subject to very close scrutiny:

> Is this truth just another bid for power and mastery over others, like fascism and Marxism were, the discredited ideologies of the twentieth century? Evangelism that proclaims a gospel of truth, yet pays little attention to the kind of community it creates or the quality of life of the people it shapes, is

> unlikely to be listened to for very long by those who have imbibed the postmodern suspicion of disembodied truth with their mother's milk.[60]

This brings us on to the second point of consensus, which is that it is the way that the Christian community lives the Christian life that will give plausibility to the Christian message.

In a phrase that has become famous, Bishop Lesslie Newbigin made this point by declaring that it is the local Christian congregation that is the 'hermeneutic of the gospel':

> How is it possible that the gospel should be credible, that people should come to believe that the power which has the last word in human affairs is represented by a man hanging on a cross? I am suggesting that the only answer, the only hermeneutic of the gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.[61]

A similar point is made by Tomlin, drawing on the letter to the Ephesians:

> the Church's first task is to be what it is meant to be, to display the wisdom of God to whoever looks in from the outside. This new community is called to demonstrate, by the distinctiveness of its life and the harmony created among very different people, God's variegated wisdom.

As members of the Church our task is

> to learn to live the Christian life before we talk about it; to walk the walk, before we talk the talk. God has chosen to work out his will for the world not through a bunch of individuals being sent out to persuade others to believe in him, but by creating a new community made up of very different people,

> giving them his Spirit who enables them to live together in unity, to develop a new way of life and to live this way of life publicly.[62]

It is as the local church is this kind of community that it will be a 'provocative church', in the sense that its way of life will provoke people to ask about the beliefs that inspire that life of that community and to take those beliefs seriously.[63]

If we ask in more detail what the characteristics of a provocative church would belike, a picture that would elicit widespread agreement is provided by Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali in his book *Shapes of the Church to Come*. Drawing on Newbigin's teaching about the key role of the local congregation in providing a plausible interpretation of the gospel to the surrounding community, he writes: 'As the Christian congregation rehearses the words and works of Jesus, exhibits his risen life in the sacraments, renews itself again and again in these ways, it draws others into this life. In doing so it provides them also with the "lenses" needed to interpret an ambiguous world.'[64]

A congregation, he says,

> will be an effective 'hermeneutic' of the gospel if it is a community of praise and thanksgiving. As another bishop, Stephen Sykes, has said, those who praise God in the congregation are led to praise him in the world. It will be a community of truth, living by that true story which reveals the purpose of this world and tells us something of our destiny. In doing this, it will have to battle with other accounts of our existence that deny purpose or belittle human dignity. It will be deeply involved in all that promotes the common good in the neighbourhood. Its members will be trained, supported and nourished in their

> task of being a royal priesthood. That is to say, they will be enabled to bring God to the world and the world to God. It is the task of the ministerial priesthood to make sure that this enabling is happening. They exercise their specific ministry so that all of the baptized can exercise theirs. Such a community will be an example of mutual support and responsibility, setting its face against individualism even when it is about spiritual fulfilment. Above all, it will be a community of hope. Hope in making things better in this life (as the Christian Aid slogan has it 'We believe in life before death') but also hope in the fulfilment of our deepest spiritual longings for fellowship with God, the source of all that exists. These communities of praise, truth and hope will make a difference to the world and, in doing so, will most effectively communicate the good news of Jesus Christ.[65]

It might be argued by those who take a radical view of what the Church needs to look like in the twenty-first century that this view of the Church is too conservative. They might, argue, for example, that Nazir-Ali's understanding of the Church is hierarchical when society is increasingly egalitarian and that it suggests that the Church's task is to uphold a given truth whereas in fact what the Church ought to be doing is providing a place in which individuals can discover for themselves what truth means in matters of religion.

From a Church of England perspective it would, however, be impossible to go down the road that this sort of criticism suggests. This is because the Church of England believes that it does have a truthful message about God that it is called by God to proclaim.[66] It also believes, as the mainstream of the Christian Church has always believed, that the Church is necessarily a hierarchical institution in the sense that there

are those called by God to provide leadership to and exercise authority over the Church as whole.[67] Given that the Church of England believes this, any new form of the Church of England's life must possess the sort of features that Nazir-Ali describes.

The third point of consensus is that there will need to be new forms of Christian mission communities ('fresh expressions') that are relevant to people today. This means two things in particular.

First, in order to act effectively as the hermeneutic of the gospel, churches have to be proactive in reaching out into their local areas. To quote Barley again:

> No longer can the church continue to insist that people *come to it* when so many have been distanced from the church in recent years. Early Christians stepped out in faith to spread the gospel and local churches today must step out into the very places that God has put them. They must engage with their localities before they can with confidence invite [them] into the church. Churches that are responding to this challenge are finding that they are arresting the decline in churchgoing in interesting ways by thinking outside the box or, more relevantly, outside the walls.[68]

Secondly, in reaching out beyond their walls, churches have to relate to the new patterns of networks and communities in which people now live. Just as in the nineteenth century the churches had to adapt the way that they traditionally operated in order to cope with the challenges of urbanization. so now they have to adapt again to meet the challenges of the 'network society'.

Thus, from a Church of England perspective, *Mission-shaped Church* declares that the parochial system, on which the Church of England has traditionally relied as the delivery system for mission and pastoral care, is now like a 'vast slab of Gruyère cheese', in the sense that it presents itself as 'one solid reality, but examination shows that by its nature there are lots of holes where there is no cheese'.[69] Although in theory everyone has their local Church of England church, in reality there are many parts of urban England where there are: 'pockets of 2000–5000 people who are unchurched for all practical purposes'.[70] This is where church planting and fresh expressions of church fit into the picture since they can

> help to identify and begin to fill the geographical and cultural gaps. They also represent ways to engage with the cultural and network patterns within which people live their lives. To be a Church for the nation, the holes in our national network need to be filled. To be Anglican is to want to be rooted in communities and to be accessible to those communities (however these communities define themselves).[71]

It is important to note that it is not being suggested that church planting and fresh expressions of church should replace the existing parochial system. What is being suggested instead is the development of what the Archbishop of Canterbury has called a 'mixed economy', in which new ways of being church supplement the traditional parochial system in order to help fill the 'holes in our national network'.

A further point of widely, but not universally, shared agreement is that ecumenism is integral to mission. This is because the task of mission to the nation is beyond the resources of any one denomination, but also, and more fundamentally, it is because it is as the churches demonstrate that unity that is God's gift to them in Christ that the

gospel will made plausible and the world will come to believe (John 17.20-21). As Ephesians 1.3–3.12 puts it, it is the visible unity of the Church, made up from both Jews and Gentiles, that makes manifest both to the world and to the heavenly powers God's eternal plan to unite all things to himself in Christ.

In the words of the 1996 Anglican–Methodist report *Commitment to Mission and Unity*:

> The Gospel Message . . . is compromised by our divisions, and consequently our witness to reconciliation is undermined. The Church is called to offer to the world through its own life the possibility of the unity and peace which God intends for the whole creation. The continuing divisions between our churches give an ambiguous message to a society which is itself divided in many ways.[72]

In the previous chapter we looked at what we can learn about ministry from a fresh study of the New Testament in the light of modern scholarship. In this chapter we have considered the historical and contemporary context for thinking about mission and ministry in the Church of England. In the next chapter we shall undertake an exercise in constructive theology, offering a theology of ministry, ordained and lay, in the context of mission.

Chapter 4

Towards a theology of mission and ministry, ordained and lay

How is ministry related to mission?

The Church of England's energies are increasingly directed to mission and evangelization. At the same time, huge resources are poured into ordained ministry in training, stipends and pensions. Increasing resources are also being devoted to the training of lay ministers. There is, therefore, an imperative to hold mission and ministry together. They cannot be treated as separate activities and placed in watertight compartments. In a post-Christian environment, ministry – ordained and lay – must be shaped by mission and geared to evangelization. The Church of England is striving to become what the church in the Acts of the Apostles was and every church should be – a missionary church, a mission-shaped church. It is struggling to become organized – and in some cases, perhaps, to become motivated – to reach out to the vast numbers of people in our society who have little understanding of the Christian faith and lack meaningful contact with the Church. A missionary church will be equipped to lead them, if they will, to faith and baptism and so to take their place in the body of Christ and in the life of the Church – and then to send them out as witnesses to the new creation and to serve God's kingdom of love and justice in the world.

As part of this process of heightened mission-awareness, the culture of the Church of England is becoming less clerical. Most clergy know that the days of the one-man-band, the omnicompetent vicar, are over. They are learning to work more collaboratively, both with each other and with lay people. The gifts, experience and

ministry of lay people is being increasingly valued and encouraged. As we have seen in the previous chapter, lay ministries that are recognized either at a diocesan or at a parochial level are proliferating, while Reader ministry, recognized at the national level, remains very strong.

Yet many people, both laity or clergy, are far from clear about some of these important connections and distinctions: for example, the relationship between mission and ministry, or between ordained and lay ministry, or between presbyters and deacons, or between deacons and Readers. Are mission and ministry the same thing under two different names, or are they separate, albeit related activities? What makes the difference between ordained and lay ministry and on what criteria do we say, 'This is an ordained ministry, and that is a lay ministry'? Why are deacons normally ordained to the priesthood after a year – does that imply that to be a deacon is something that does not matter very much and can be left behind as soon as is decently possible? If so, why bother having deacons at all? Why are deacons ordained and said to be 'in Holy Orders' when they cannot preside at the Eucharist, pronounce absolution or give the Blessing? Why should we have separate ministries of deacons and Readers when the functional difference between them is comparatively small? Should some Readers be actively encouraged to seek ordination? Altogether: how does the mission and the ministry that the Church receives from God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, work itself out through the contributions of lay and ordained, Readers, deacons, presbyters and bishops?

In this chapter we attempt to answer these questions – to clarify the meaning of mission, to relate it to evangelization, and to show how the ministry of the Church

flows from its God-given mission. We build on what an earlier chapter has shown with regard to the meaning of the New Testament term 'ministry' (*diakonia*). We argue (in line with the report *Presence and Prophecy*)[1] that *the mission of the Church takes the form of a ministry* and that this has both ordained and lay expressions. We spell out the content of this ministry in terms of the fundamental tasks which are entrusted to the Church and which make it what it is – the agent and instrument of the gospel of Christ and of the gospel's means of grace for the salvation of the world.

The mission of God and the mission of the Church

To get the discussion started, we suggest the following working definition of the mission of Christ's Church: *mission is the whole Church proclaiming the whole Christ to the whole world.* Here mission is seen as at the heart of the Church's existence, as the cutting edge of its life. The Church's mission is its overall purpose, its *raison d'être*, the reason why God has called it into being. It follows that the mission of the Church faces primarily towards God in obedience, worship and service, as well as towards the world in witness, proclamation, reconciliation and outreach. The purpose of the Church and of all the faithful within her is to love and adore, to serve and obey the Lord. Prayer, praise, the celebration of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, and the confession of the faith all have their primary orientation towards God and their secondary orientation to the world. The purpose of the Church and of all its members is (as the Westminster Shorter Catechism classically put it) 'to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever'. Let us spell this out in more detail. Expanding our working definition, we can say:

(a) Mission is the overall task entrusted to *the whole Church*. The Church is an apostolic or missionary body. To confess, as we do, at the Eucharist, in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, that the Church is apostolic is to confess that it is a missionary Church. 'Apostle' and 'missionary' are derived from the Greek (*apostello*) and Latin (*mitto*) forms of the verb 'to send' respectively. Just as Jesus Christ was sent into the world by the Father, so he sends the Church into the world in his name (John 17.18; Luke 24.47). And just as all that Jesus said and did was suffused by his overpowering consciousness of being sent, so all that the Church does and says should be so motivated (John 20.21b; cf. Matthew 10.40; Luke 10.16).

Here we clearly see the trinitarian structure of mission: the Father sends the Son; the Son sends the Apostles, representing the Church; Father and Son together send the Holy Spirit upon the Church. Mission flows from the one God in Trinity. In mission the Church is caught up in the trinitarian action *ad extra*, beyond itself. It is this divine dynamic that makes our mission viable and ensures that it is not in vain.

Because the mission of the Church in the world takes the form of a ministry and because all the faithful are caught up in that mission, we can say that not only mission but also ministry is entrusted to the whole Church, to the Church as such, not simply to the ordained. Every baptized believer is potentially a minister as well as a missionary. As we have seen in our study of *diakonos* and *diakonia*, the essence of the New Testament language of ministry is an authoritative commissioning to carry out a responsible task.

(b) In mission the whole Church proclaims *the whole Christ* to the whole world. If, as St Augustine of Hippo said, 'the whole Christ is the head and the body', he is already present in and with his Church in its mission, just as he had promised to be: 'I am with you always, to the end of the age' (Matthew 28.20). The Church does not *introduce* Jesus Christ into a situation where he was previously absent, for he is ahead of every action of the Church and does not need the Church's permission to be present. Christ is present, is at work, and is found by many in every place and time, through the universal salvific activity of the Holy Spirit. 'He was in the world...' (John 1. 10). The Church is not the only instrument of God's mission and does not have a monopoly on God's involvement in the world. However, God has chosen to work through the Church and is committed to her covenantally by the scriptural promises (especially in the Great Commission Matthew 28.18-20), by the gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24.46-48; John 20.22-23; Acts 2.1-4) and by the sacraments of salvation: baptism and the Eucharist (Holy Communion). We can say that the Church is the privileged instrument of God's mission. But God is not dependent on the Church. The Church proclaims the present, not the absent Christ. In the celebration of the sacraments, we say that the minister does what the Church does and, moreover, does it in the name of Christ and in obedience to his command. In the sacramental action the whole Church is acting. The whole body celebrates the sacraments, while the bishop or priest presides at the celebration in the name of Christ.[2] The ministerial actions of the Church are catholic (universal) actions of the whole Church. So the whole Christ is revealed and received in his word and his sacraments where these are ministered in the spirit of compassionate care shown by the Good Shepherd (Luke 15.3-7; John 10.1-18).

(c) In mission the whole Church proclaims the whole Christ to *the whole world*. The mission of the Church is catholic because it is universal in its scope. The gospel meets the needs of humankind in all its diversity and difference. But the emphasis here also falls on wholeness. It is persons, created in the image of the personal God, who are both the agents and the recipients of mission. In mission people are sent to people: mission takes place person-to-person, face-to-face. In mission, the Church draws near to individuals, households, families and communities in the name of the person of Jesus Christ. It seeks to lead them into greater wholeness by drawing them, through repentance, faith and the extended process of Christian initiation, into the life of the Christian community as the Body of Christ. It ministers among them and to them in a personal way and within a context of right and just relationships. However, the Church's proclamation is not merely a matter of words: unless they are backed up by action and by example, they will ring hollow. Proclamation of the gospel must be by word and deed.

The mission of God

Nothing less than this holistic definition of mission is called for because our whole life as Christians – our entire Christian existence in this world – is necessarily geared to mission. Christian discipleship is orientated to God's loving purpose for the world and for the whole of creation that flows from God's plan of salvation. 'God our Saviour... desires everyone to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth' (1 Timothy 2.4). The Second Vatican Council (1962–65), speaking of the missionary activity of the Church, affirmed that 'the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature'.[3]

Underlying the teaching of the churches on mission is the profound concept of twentieth-century ecumenical theology, that of *missio dei*, the mission of God, the mission that flows from the heart of God. *Missio dei* speaks of the overflowing of the love of God's being and nature into God's purposeful activity in the world. We do not begin from the mission of the Church, but from the mission of God: that is the foundation of every thought, prayer and action that contributes to the Church's task.[4]

The concept of *missio dei* came to focus in Protestant theology in the work of Karl Barth in the early 1930s, the term being coined by Karl Hartenstein in 1934. In a way that was typical of his whole theological emphasis, Barth began to speak of mission as an activity, not primarily of human beings, but of God. The idea of the *missio dei*, though not the term, was adopted by the Willingen conference of the International Missionary Council in 1952. The statement of this conference affirmed: 'The missionary movement of which we are a part has its source in the Triune God himself. Out of the depths of his love for us, the Father has sent forth his own beloved Son to reconcile all things to himself . . .' It went on to say: 'We who have been chosen in Christ... are committed to full participation in his redeeming mission. There is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission to the world. That by which the Church receives its existence is that by which it is also given its world-mission.'[5]

In the ecumenical theological movement the mission of God and the unity of God's Church have been held together in an indissoluble biblical connection. Trinitarian theologians, from Rahner to Moltmann, filled out the triune nature of the sending. Mission is seen as deriving from the very nature of God and is interpreted in the light of the Church's confession of faith in the Holy Trinity. According to this insight,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit together – the holy and undivided Trinity – send the Church into the world in mission. Christian mission is an expression of the trinitarian movement of God towards the world. The Church is an instrument of this movement. The Church exists because God's redemptive purpose – in the profound, nuanced sense of *missio dei* – is under way. As David Bosch wrote: 'The *missio dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the Church and the world, and in which the Church may be privileged to participate.' Therefore, Bosch concludes, we can say that 'mission has its origin in the heart of God'.[6]

Because mission is the overflowing of God's love in order to reconcile the world to God, it has an eternal and cosmic dimension. *Missio dei* encompasses and enfolds the world and the Church. It reflects the prevenient grace of God. The mystery of God's will, disclosed in the coming of Christ, 'as a plan for the fullness of time', is 'to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth' (Ephesians 1.9-10). The mission of God is much bigger than the Church and is not restricted to the Church: it is universal and indeed cosmic in scope. Christian mission is fundamentally a response to the initiative of grace that has already brought the Church into being. Jürgen Moltmann describes the *missio dei* as 'a movement from God in which the Church has its origin and arrives at its own movement, but which goes beyond the Church, finding its own goal in the consummation of all creation in God'.[7]

There is a *missiological identity* between Christ and the Church. In the New Testament, the Apostles do what Christ does; the risen Christ works through them. In John's Gospel the risen Christ imparts his power and his authority to the Apostles with the words, 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you' (John 20.19-23). In the

Great Commission Jesus sends the Apostles to make disciples of all nations and promises to be present with them in this task (Matthew 28.18-20). Luke makes it clear that repentance and forgiveness are to be proclaimed by the Church to all the nations 'in his name' (Luke 24.47). The book of Acts presents the Apostles as Christ's witnesses in the power of the same Spirit that rested upon him (Acts 1.8). But this is in fact true of the New Testament material in its entirety. As Alan Richardson put it: 'The ministry of the Church is the continuation of the apostolic and priestly ministry of Christ himself . . . his ministry to the world is fulfilled through the instrumentality of his resurrection body, the Church'.[8]

The Church carries out its God-given overall task by doing the things that it has been commissioned to do – and nothing else. This sounds like a truism, but in fact recalls us to our true priorities, given in the commissioning of the Apostles. Mission is the Church *being* the Church and living out the totality of its life, grounded in the grace of God. What precisely is this commission and what is the Church here to do? We argue that *the Church is commissioned by Christ primarily to carry out a ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care.* It is to do that as 'sign, instrument and foretaste' of the kingdom of God. But it is only because the Church *is* the body of Christ and enjoys communion with Father, Son and Holy Spirit that it is able to do the work of God.

The tasks of the Church

The Great Commission embodies Christ's intention for his Church, which is represented at this point by the apostolic community. It is not, of course, the only text that expresses Christ's intention for the Church, but, as an extended, theologically developed formula, it is crucial.[9] When we look carefully at this text (Matthew 28.19-

20) we can see that it implies in principle three tasks for the Apostles and therefore for the Church: the ministry of pastoral care, the ministry of the sacraments and the ministry of the word: 'Go therefore and *make disciples* of all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching* them to obey all that I have commanded you.' Here are three activities that Jesus explicitly commands: making disciples, teaching, and baptising. Each specific activity, commanded by Jesus, can stand, without stretching the evidence, for a particular area of the Church's ministry. Teaching broadly equates to the ministry of the word; baptism refers us to the ministry of the sacraments; and making disciples points to the ministry of pastoral care and oversight. These three key tasks are not separable from one another, but interpenetrate. We make disciples by means of word and sacrament; the ministry of the word is always part of the celebration of the sacraments, and so on. They are three great mountain peaks that are joined at the base.

Taking the Great Commission as our paradigm of mission is not intended to curtail what can be regarded as belonging to mission. The whole range of the Church's intentional activity in the world can be related to this template. This intentional activity is encompassed in the Five Marks of Mission, endorsed by the Church of England's General Synod and by the Lambeth Conference:

- To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform the unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

So, for example, Christian endeavours in the sphere of education can be seen as a vital way in which the word and truth of Christ are made known, for all knowledge and truth derive from the Word (*Logos*). Acting for justice and the liberation of the oppressed, an essential part of the Church's mission, can be seen both as carrying forward the compassionate care of the Good Shepherd and as a necessary way of implementing the truth of the gospel. Christian achievement in the realm of the arts, in the context of worship, can be seen as a creative expression of the sacramental ministry of the Church. But every activity should be brought to the touchstone of Jesus Christ's action in the world, which is continuous with his earthly ministry and the charge to his Apostles.

The ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care corresponds to the threefold identity of Jesus as the Messiah (Christ). As the Messiah/Christ, or 'Anointed One', Jesus has a threefold anointing of the Holy Spirit, being empowered by God as prophet, priest and king, which were the three offices in ancient Israel that received an anointing with the Spirit of the Lord, and usually with oil to signify this. A prophet speaks God's word with inspired authority to a situation. A priest is concerned with worship, reconciliation and sacrifice. A king or queen governs and rules among the people for their good.[10]

All the faithful share in the threefold anointing of their Messiah, as a royal prophetic priesthood (1 Peter 2.9-10) and this is a truth that is recognized by all the churches. The threefold identity corresponds to the widely recognized vocation of the Church to *teach* by the word, to *sanctify* by the sacraments (in union with the Word), and to *govern* (shepherd, guide and lead) the people of God. These tasks (*munera* in the

language of Vatican II) clearly shape the ministry of the ordained. Lay people share equally in this threefold calling, since they participate through faith and baptism in the threefold messianic identity of Jesus Christ. Lay Christians (baptized believers) read, study, discuss and pass on the word of God and may be called to teach and preach it. They corporately celebrate and receive the sacraments, with bishop or priest presiding, and may be called to assist in the liturgy and the administration of the sacraments. They have a pastoral care for one another and for their clergy, and may be called to play their part in the governance of the Church and the direction of its mission through representative structures of participation.[11]

Although it is the ministry of word and of the sacraments that are the *presenting* marks of the Church (cf. Article XIX of the Thirty-Nine Articles), this ministry clearly belongs in the context of pastoral care and oversight, the 'making disciples' of the Great Commission. The Porvoo Agreement (1996) between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches states: 'We believe that the Church is constituted and sustained by the Triune God through God's saving action in word and sacraments' (Porvoo para. 32(f); broadly following the Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelische Kirche in Deutchsland: Meissen para. 16(vii)).[12] However, the Porvoo Agreement recognizes that the ministry of word and sacrament does not stand alone or exhaust the essential tasks of the Church. A ministry of word and sacrament that was not set in the context of pastoral care and oversight would not have that relational, person-to-person, face-to-face quality that is the key to effective mission and for that reason alone it would be missiologically unfruitful. So the Porvoo Agreement adds: 'We believe that a ministry of pastoral oversight *(episcope)*, exercised in personal, collegial and

communal ways, is necessary as witness to and safeguard of the unity and apostolicity of the Church' (Porvoo para. 32(k); following Meissen para. 15(x)).[13]

Article XIX of the Thirty-Nine Articles states, in accordance with Reformation theology, that 'The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men (*coetus fidelium* [that is, not merely the local congregation in our modern sense, but a community of various extents, up to the universal level]) in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.' The preaching of the biblical message and the right administration of the sacraments are seen as the signs that the Church, with its saving means of grace, is present. But clearly the word does not preach itself and the sacraments do not minister themselves. They require human agents who have received the calling, the training and the authority to do this. So, without stretching a point, we can see that a dedicated ministry, which has stewardship of word and sacrament and underpins them with pastoral care, is implied in this particular historic formulary of the Church of England.

So what is and what is not ministry?

Our concern is to hold ministry and mission together, to unite them in the life of the Church, just as they are indissolubly connected in Scripture. However, like 'mission', 'ministry' is a word that is used all too easily and probably too often. 'Ministry' is now a seriously overused word. In much that is written on this subject, it is asked to do too much and to work too hard. As a result, there is confusion and uncertainty about what 'ministry' means and to whom it applies. What activities does 'ministry' include and who are the 'ministers'? Ministry has been called (by Helen

Oppenheimer) a ‘greedy concept’, one that is all absorbing. The notion of ministry has become so broad that it is in danger of becoming rather meaningless.

In recent years there has been a perfectly proper reaction against the clericalist monopoly that can develop in churches that have a high view of Holy Orders. The clericalist concept of ministry narrows the meaning of ministry by restricting it to those who are ordained, to the official work of the clergy (as in the expression ‘going into the ministry’), thus effectively disenfranchising lay people as far as ministry is concerned. But, in the salutary process of liberating ministry from clericalism, we may have broadened it to the extent that it now has no boundaries. The words ‘ministry’ and ‘minister’ are in need of some refocusing. In this process, our starting point must be the way that the New Testament uses the language of ministry, which we have looked at in an earlier chapter.

In attempting to refocus the term ‘ministry’ and to reclaim a specific meaning for it, we have two main concerns. The first concern is to distinguish ministry from everyday Christian life, which is marked by the calling to discipleship. The second concern is to avoid an individualistic and subjective approach to ministry and to reposition it within the mission of the Church as a body. We now take these two issues in order.

In some contexts, we find the term ‘ministry’ used in an undisciplined and unfocused way to refer to anything a Christian does in his or her life of discipleship. Whatever is consecrated to Christ, whatever is done in a spirit of self-offering and out of love for God and one’s neighbour is sometimes dubbed ‘ministry’. If we are not careful, the

term ‘ministry’ can absorb the whole of the Christian life into itself. Then there would be nothing that is not ministry and the term would have lost all meaning.

When we are thinking more carefully about it, however, we tend to use the word ‘ministry’ for actions that are acknowledged, expected or mandated by the church, actions that have a public dimension and are subject to some kind of accountability and oversight. This is consonant with the meaning of the New Testament Greek term *diakonia*, which, as we have seen, basically refers to carrying out a commissioned task, as an agent of someone in authority. If Christian actions lack these elements, they do not fully qualify as examples of ministry but are better described as instances of everyday Christian discipleship. This distinction leads to the second area where greater clarity is required.

The second problem is the common tendency to view ministry in an individualistic and proprietorial way, as though ministry is our personal possession. Alarmingly subjective assumptions regarding ministry are revealed when people make claims about ‘my ministry’ and ‘the ministry God has given me’. It is not at all unusual for people to suggest to bishops and clergy that the Church should ‘recognize their ministry’. On the one hand, these tell-tale phrases reveal how fundamental the sense of having a ministry is to our personal identity and sense of self-worth. It is very precious to the individual and to feel that it is threatened is deeply painful. A personal sense of call, a wholehearted response to God, is vital; the individual needs to own their vocation. But, on the other hand, current attitudes reveal how little awareness there is of the truth that it is for the Church corporately to discern what a person’s ministry is and to decide how and where it should be exercised.

Discovering ministry is a joint exercise in which the Church and the individual Christian discern God's will and purpose together.

The truth is that on our own we cannot know what our ministry is: we need the Church to help us to understand the ministry to which we are called. Much Christian activity is merely self-authorized – and on our terms that actually disqualifies it as ministry. Ministry is not whatever an individual feels moved to do for the Lord or to offer to the Church, whether it is needed or not. That way of looking at the matter has things the wrong way round. Ministry is a set of roles and activities that are thrust upon us, sometimes to our surprise, and perhaps reluctantly accepted at first. As we have seen in our study of the New Testament material, all Christians are gifted by the Holy Spirit, but not all necessarily have a ministry that is recognized by the Church.

It is, we suggest, *discipleship*, not ministry, that is the more inclusive category. The Christian life is a life of discipleship; ministry is an expression of apostleship. Discipleship and apostleship are not identical, though they are closely connected. In our baptism all Christians are called to be disciples of Christ and promise to follow and obey him through union with his death and resurrection. The first disciples literally followed Jesus on a journey that would lead to their apostolic commissioning. The same people can be both disciples and Apostles, but they cannot be Apostles until they have been disciples. Discipleship is intrinsic to being a baptized follower of Jesus Christ. Ministry is something that is subsequently discerned and for which we need to be called and equipped. All ministers should be disciples, but not all disciples are necessarily ministers.

Does this mean, then, that 'ministry' becomes an elitist term, confined to the select few? By no means. All baptized believers are members of the *laos*, the people called by God. The *laos* embraces all the faithful, the ordained as well as the 'lay'. 'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people (*laos*), in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people"' (1 Peter 2.9-10). As the Second Vatican Council said, 'This messianic people . . . established by Christ as a fellowship of life, charity, and truth . . . is also used by him as an instrument for the redemption of all, and is sent forth into the whole world as the light of the world and the salt of the earth (cf. Matthew 5.13-16)'.[14] Because all the faithful are incorporated into the *missio dei* through their Christian initiation, and because mission takes the form of a ministry, we must affirm that 'ministry' is not an elitist but an inclusive term. But what does this mean in practice?

All Christians have received the Holy Spirit through their initiation into the body of Christ: baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist. Every limb or organ of the body of Christ has a vital role for the well being of the whole body (1 Corinthians 12). Potentially all baptized believers are ministers. All should endeavour to be ready to minister in one way or another, as soon as they are called (by the Holy Spirit and the church). But the call needs to be given, as well as received. A person's ministry can be recognized and owned by the community in tacit and informal ways, as well as in explicit and formal ones, but one way or another, ministers must be seen to act not in their own name, but in the name of Christ's Church.

What we need to guard against is not the idea that every baptized Christian can and should have a ministry, but the twin misconceptions: first that everything that a Christian does, in dedication to the Lord, is ministry; and, second, that it is appropriate for an individual to decide what their ministry is. The best, the biblical model is where every active member of a Christian community has a role within which they exercise their God-given gifts and this is recognized, formally or informally, by the Christian community. Then the Pauline image of the body working together in every limb and organ (1 Corinthians 12.12-31; Ephesians 4.4-16) becomes a reality. But that role needs to be assigned, and then it needs to be accepted and inhabited over time. Ministry takes place when a person, whether lay or ordained, performs a role or task on behalf of the Christian community which the community recognizes as its own work, given it by God in the fundamental commissioning of the Church.

We began this chapter by setting ministry and mission within God's plan of salvation. The Church is created to share in the *missio dei*. The outworking of God's purposes is bigger than the Church – its ultimate ramifications are veiled from our sight – but the Church is the privileged instrument of God's saving purpose. God's mission includes the Church. The Church exists to glorify God and to rejoice in God's love, beauty and goodness. Rejoicing in God overflows in service of God and the gospel of God. Love for God, answering God's prevenient love for us, impels us to share God's love with all. That is the driving force of mission. The mission that the Church receives from God is not vague and diffuse. It is focused and specific and takes the form of a ministry: a triple ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care. On the basis of our study of New Testament concepts and of the theological principles just discussed, we

are now in a position to affirm that *'ministry' refers to God-given work, for the kingdom of God, that is acknowledged by the Church*. This means that ministry is missional in character through and through. Ministry is not a 'domestic' ecclesiastical matter. It is not confined to the 'internal' life of the congregation (say in worship, teaching, pastoral care or administration), but is exercised in the service of God's kingdom far and wide. Ministry is, therefore, shot through with a missionary imperative. Because mission takes the form of a ministry, ministry must be shaped by mission. Here all ministry stands in close relationship to the ongoing process of evangelization and to particular acts of evangelism.

In the light of what we have said so far, we can make several further affirmations about ministry.

All ministry is Christ's

Christian ministry is an expression and manifestation of the ministry of the risen, ascended and glorified Lord Jesus Christ. Although ministry could not take place without unworthy and fallible human instruments, the most profound truth about Christian ministry, whether ordained or lay, is that it is the ministry of Jesus Christ in and through his Body. Ordination is ultimately conferred by Christ himself (though, of course, through the agency of the Church) and gives the ordinand a relationship to Jesus Christ in their ministry.[15] We see this relationship in connection with the three dimensions of ministry. Through the word of God, Christ the living Word, the eternal *Logos*, teaches the hearts of his faithful people. Through the sacraments he who is the bread of life and gives living water to all who are thirsty gives us new birth and nourishes us by his grace. Through the ministry of pastoral care Christ the Good

Shepherd cares for, protects, guides and leads his people in the paths of righteousness. The norm of ministry is the ministry of Christ. His ministry is the source, the template and the touchstone of the Church's ministry, ordained and lay.

Ministry is representative

This means that there is a sense in which Christian ministry is representative of Christ as well as of the Church. It does not make sense to separate Christ from his body. If ministry represents the Church, in the sense that it speaks and acts on behalf of the Church (and we have already said that this is an essential condition for anything to qualify as ministry), it must also represent the Head of the Church, the source of all gifts, callings and ministries. We cannot minister Christ's word and sacraments in the context of the care, support and guidance that the Chief Shepherd entrusts to his pastors, without in some sense representing him. However, it is important to be clear that to see the ministry as publicly representing Christ is not to make the individual minister as a personality an icon of Christ. It is the office, the tasks and the action that count. Although ministers are called to lead a life of exemplary holiness, they are not purely by virtue of their ministry closer to God than other Christians, nor are they necessarily more holy, nor do they necessarily have stronger faith. It is through the power of the word, the celebration of the sacraments and the actual exercise of pastoral care that Christ is present, through the Holy Spirit, to give himself to those who will receive him by faith.

Ministry is related to the key tasks of the Church

We have seen that the ministry of the Church flows from the Church's part and role in the mission of God: mission takes the form of a ministry. The three major

missiological tasks laid upon the Church in the New Testament (particularly signified in the Great Commission) can be subsumed under the headings of the word, the sacraments and pastoral responsibility. As we have already emphasized, these headings should not be interpreted too narrowly: they are broad areas of mandated activity. For example, the ministry of the word is not exhausted by preaching, vital though that is, but includes many forms of proclamation, in evangelism and apologetics, and various forms of teaching, including instruction (catechesis) of children and young people, especially of baptism and confirmation candidates and their sponsors. The ministry of the sacraments represents the broad area of the Church's worship and rites, of which the dominical sacraments are the controlling focus, and therefore includes music and singing, and various artistic expressions that enhance worship and beautify the house of God or point to the beauty of God in contexts well beyond the Church's apparent reach. And the ministry of pastoral responsibility extends from episcopal oversight at one end to synodical involvement at the other, while all Christians have a care for one another and help bear one another's burdens. Beyond that, the pastoral task of the Church is extended to serving God's purpose in the world, in acts of justice, compassion, reconciliation and stewardship of the environment. While the criterion drawn from the Great Commission does not mean a narrow concentration on specific functions, it does mean that all the Church's activity is related to the fundamental mandated tasks and that whatever is done in the name of the Church should be brought to this touchstone.

Ministry embraces ordained and lay

We have questioned whether it accords with New Testament usage to assume that all Christians are automatically ministers, apart from the awarding of a specific role by

the Church, which recognizes the gifts of the Spirit. We have also challenged the assumption that everything that is done or offered in a spirit of devotion and service, at the initiative of the individual alone, should be dubbed 'ministry'. But that does not mean that the ministry, in our sense of 'God-given work for the kingdom of God, that is recognized by the Church', is confined to the ordained. Far from it: that would be a retreat into the clerical monopoly that we have already deplored. Ministry belongs to the people of God, the *laos*, as such, not simply to the ordained part of it. There is lay ministry as well as ordained ministry: we shall have more to say about both very shortly. We might note here that religious orders, which clearly have a defined ministry, under proper authority, and make a notable contribution to the mission of the Church, whether through prayer, study, teaching or active engagement with the world, sometimes include ordained and lay persons and so provide a model of how they may work together in mission and ministry. Similarly, the growing ministry of spiritual direction transcends the ordained-lay distinction.

Ministries are full and equal

It is all too easy to slip into a way of thinking about the ministry that involves a hierarchy of values – to assume that ministries are of varying value, some more important, some less so. This invidious assumption undermines the effectiveness of Christ's ministry in his body. Rather we need to affirm that all ministries are full and equal, each having its own integrity because each participates in the mission that the Church receives from God. Each ministry is a full one, in its own terms, not a poor substitute for something else, and all ministries are equal in value in the divine economy and should be regarded and treated as equal in value in the way that the Church administers them. This is the only way that St Paul's imagery of the body,

having many limbs and organs, all of which are equally necessary to its proper and efficient functioning, allows us to think (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4). To put it sharply: the work of an archbishop is not more important in the eyes of God than the work of a lay pastoral assistant; it may seem to have a wider influence, but only God knows how our ministry will bear fruit. What is important in the eyes of God is that each should follow their calling to the full. Among ordained ministries, we should not think of priests as doing less vital work than bishops, or of deacons as somehow inferior to priests. Any competitiveness among ministries is wholly out of place. Walter Kasper has written: 'Bishops, priests and deacons share, each in their own way, in the one mission of Jesus Christ, and they must collaborate in a fraternal and collegial manner'.[16]

Ministry belongs to God's ordering of the Church

While we rightly speak of 'orders of ministry' and of 'Holy Orders', there is in truth one order that applies to the whole Church. 'Holy Order' is singular: the whole Church is ordered to the mission and ministry that are given by God. The ordained alone cannot possibly carry out this mission-ministry. It is vital to affirm the ministry given to lay people alongside and in association with that given to the ordained. Because the Church is caught up in the *missio dei* and its part in God's mission takes the form of a ministry – a triple ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care – these tasks are given to the body as a whole. It is the Spirit-bearing body, the baptized Church with its messianic anointing that is entrusted with the tasks of ministry. But then the question arises: what makes one ministry 'ordained' and another not? What is signified by the distinction between lay and ordained forms of ministry? This question

requires us to say something more about the ordained ministry, though without attempting a systematic or comprehensive theology of ordination.

Ordained ministry

Why ordination?

We have seen that several affirmations can be made about the ministry of the Church, quite apart from and prior to the distinction between its lay and its ordained members: first, that all ministry is Christ's ministry; second, that it is representative of Christ and the Church; third, that it is necessarily related to the word, the sacraments and pastoral responsibility; fourth, that it is a full and equal ministry; and, finally, that it belongs to the ordering of the Church as a whole. If these central truths with regard to ministry belong to the Church as a body, why is the distinction between lay and ordained needed and what difference does ordination make?

All ministries, whether ordained or lay, comprise specific work for the kingdom of God that is recognized and owned by the Church. This includes many worthwhile activities, variously related to the word, the sacraments and pastoral care, and carried out in a spirit of dedication, but which are not necessarily lifelong, or acknowledged by the wider Church, or carried out in the public eye, and which do not necessarily involve all three dimensions of ministry, the word, the sacraments and pastoral care together. A person who performs such ministry remains a lay person.

However, when a ministry is entrusted to an individual in a form that is permanent and lifelong, public and representative, by a solemn liturgical action of the Church, we call that an 'ordained' ministry. Ordination carries a lifelong calling and

permanently identifies the recipient. It shapes that person's identity, both to himself or herself and to the world. Ordination creates, in its intention, a ministry that is universally acknowledged and interchangeable – a ministry that is in principle recognizable throughout the universal Church – rather than a local or even national office. And it brings a ministry that relates to all three dimensions of the Church's task – to the word, the sacraments and pastoral care and oversight – not simply to one or two of these components. Ordination involves a comprehensive ministry, carried out in the public eye, universally recognized and a lifelong identity. Now we look at the structure of the ordained ministry more closely.

A differentiated ordained ministry

The ordained ministry, in the form just described, is differentiated in a threefold way. First, the threefold ministry is *historically* differentiated, a fact that has been understood by many Anglicans as providential. The Preface to the Ordinal (1550, 1662) claims that the orders of bishops, priests and deacons go back to apostolic times. Today this sounds to some an over-confident assertion. The threefold ministry remains somewhat obscure in origin. It emerges clearly at the beginning of the second century, but was probably not universal in the Church at that time. Moreover, deacons, priests and bishops have not always been understood in the same way or in the same relationship to each other. The picture was complicated by the accumulation of 'minor orders' during the mediaeval period. But the basic principles and patterns on which the threefold ministry rests is certainly derived from apostolic (i.e. New Testament) and early post-apostolic teaching and practice. Its origins are certainly found there. The three orders are referred to in the New Testament, though not in a uniform or unambiguous way. The office of bishop probably overlaps chronologically

with the ministry of the Apostles. The presbyters (elders), who taught and had oversight in the Pastoral Epistles, were the forerunners of the priests of later times. The deacons (whoever they were) evolved into the ordained diaconate: those who carry out a responsible task in the name of Christ and often on behalf of the bishop.

Second, the threefold ministry is *theologically* differentiated. In one sense there is a single ordained ministry – 'Holy Order' is singular – but it takes a threefold form. There is one ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral responsibility, but it is exercised in particular and somewhat different ways by deacons, presbyters and bishops. To state it in that order underlines the sequential, articulated, indeed incremental nature of the threefold ministry, on which we will comment shortly. We consider the three 'orders' in turn.

Episcopal ministry

The bishop is the chief pastor of the portion of the people of God committed to his (or, in some churches, her) care. The bishop is the principal minister of the sacraments within that community (Canon C 18). Bishops are priests and therefore essentially ministers of word and sacrament. Bishops exercise a ministry of word and sacrament themselves and provide for and oversee the ministry of word and sacrament in their dioceses.

The diocese comprises the portion of the people of God, both lay and ordained, of which the bishop has oversight; it is the sphere and *locus* of the bishop's ministry. Originally, the *episkopos* was the chief pastor of a community that was small by modern standards: all the faithful could be physically present at the Eucharist at which

the bishop presided. The church was the community gathered around the Eucharist, celebrated by the bishop with the assistance of presbyters and deacons. As the Church expanded and the scope of the bishop's oversight was enlarged, he had to be assisted by presbyters who were spread over a number of congregations in a city. Nevertheless, the presiding role of the bishop was retained, even though it was not normally possible for all the faithful to come together at the bishop's Eucharist on the Lord's Day. Ecclesiologically speaking, therefore, the diocese is still the 'local church', albeit containing many even more localized churches, the parishes; it is the sphere of the bishop's oversight of word and sacrament. [17]

Because the bishop is the principal minister of the word, he (or, in some churches, she) has a special, though not exclusive responsibility for maintaining the Church in the faith, feeding the people with the truth of the gospel, and discerning how the revelation once and for all given and embodied in the Scriptures is to be applied to the changing world of the present. As the principal minister of the sacraments, the bishop is responsible for the conduct of worship and the ordering of church buildings in the diocese. As the chief pastor, the bishop has oversight of the pastors and is responsible for their selection, training, ordination, licensing, deployment and ministerial development.

In all these areas the bishop works with ordained and lay colleagues, acts on advice, operates by delegation, and exercises oversight within the constraints of the law of the Church. The bishops together exercise a collegial responsibility for the faith and order of the Church and work with lay and ordained colleagues through structures of conciliarity, including synods, to discern and carry out what is required for the

effective mission of the Church. Suffragan bishops have the same responsibility for leadership in mission and unity and in the spheres of faith and order as diocesans do.[18]

Anglican theology has followed the early Fathers in seeing the bishop as a successor of the Apostles (and of the 'apostolic delegates' of the Pastoral Epistles) – not, of course, in the Apostles' unique role as companions of Jesus during his earthly ministry and as witnesses of the resurrection, but as bearing the same missionary character and as having the care of the churches entrusted to them.[19] Bishops are called to lead the faithful in mission to the world in the outworking of the apostolic calling of the people of God. They belong to an apostolic college and visibly represent the unity of the Church in time and space, holding local churches (dioceses) in communion with each other and forming a vital link between the Church of the present and the Church of the past, right back to the Apostles themselves, and looking forward in expectation to the fulfilment of God's purpose for the Church and all creation in the coming Kingdom of God.

Presbyteral ministry

Presbyters or priests are also ordained to a ministry of the word, the sacraments and pastoral care and oversight. They work with the bishop and under the bishop's oversight (*episkope*), usually at the parochial level but sometimes with a wider ministry within the diocese (e.g. archdeacons, deans and canons of cathedrals, specialist ministries). Priests preside at the celebration of the sacraments and there is a sense in which this is done on behalf of the bishop (who will preside in person if present).

In ordination to the priesthood, presbyters receive 'the ministry of reconciliation' (2 Corinthians 5.18), which they exercise through skilled application of the word, the sacramental means of grace and pastoral care and counsel. As St Paul's understanding of his apostleship makes abundantly clear, 'the ministry of reconciliation' is not primarily a function that is internal to the Christian community, but has a missionary cutting edge in outreach to those who, as yet, know not Christ. As an aspect of 'the ministry of reconciliation' in the widest sense, priests are given, in their ordination, the authority to absolve the penitent, by declaring the gospel promises in the name of Christ, and to bless the people in the name of the Holy Trinity.

They are the bishop's counsellors, along with those lay people who are elected to the Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Synod. There is a collegiality of bishop and presbyters (the original sense of collegiality). Priests may be entrusted with 'the cure of souls', the pastoral care and oversight of parishioners. Like the bishop, but on a smaller scale, priests preside within the community and at the celebration of the sacraments and lead the people and other ministers in mission to the world around, having oversight of evangelism among the unchurched within their sphere of pastoral responsibility.

Presbyters are the leaders and pastors of the church that is in the parish. Traditionally, presbyters have operated from a fixed parish base. This localized ministry is still vital and, in many parishes, there is considerable untapped potential for parish-centred mission and evangelism.[20] The emergence of a mixed economy in a mission-shaped church raises questions about when and how and on what terms the presbyterate should be drawn into mission communities that have matured sufficiently to need the

celebration of the Eucharist and formal pastoral oversight, which cannot, by definition, be provided by the pioneer ministers, lay and ordained, who have initiated them and led their development hitherto.

Diaconal ministry

As is appropriate in a report commissioned in part to address the relationship between diaconal and lay ministry, we say more here about deacons than we have said about bishops and priests. The most important thing to say about deacons is *not* that they are 'servants', which, as our first chapter noted, is a limited and ambiguous translation of *diakonos*. The first thing to say about deacons, in the light of the pivotal use of the terms *diakonia* and *diakonos* in the New Testament, especially by St Paul, is that deacons, in their ordination, receive the fundamental commissioning of Christ to be ministers (*diakonoi*) of the gospel. St Ignatius of Antioch calls them 'deacons of the mysteries of Jesus Christ' (cf. 1 Corinthians 4.1). They are sent by Christ, through the Church, as bearers of the Good News to the world and in this role (as the classic Anglican Ordinal of 1550/1662 particularly emphasizes) they have a special compassionate care for the needs of the sick, the lonely and the oppressed. Together with all Christians and all ministers, theirs is a life of compassionate service in obedience to Christ's command and example – service primarily of Christ and under his authority, secondarily of those who are Christ's and to whom he imparts his authority.

Deacons, like priests and bishops – and lay ministers too, for that matter – are related to the word, the sacraments and pastoral care: they receive the full ministry of the gospel. But they have an assisting, not a presiding role in relation to these three

central tasks of the Church's mission. Deacons assist the priest and the bishop and carry out the duties deputed to them in relation to this mandate. They preach, teach and give instruction in the faith. They lead the people in worship and assist in the celebration of the sacraments by bringing candidates, whom they have sought out and prepared, to baptism and (as the 1550/1662 Ordinal says), baptising them in the absence of the priest, and by assisting the president in the eucharistic liturgy and leading the people in their participation.

Deacons are ministers of pastoral care on behalf of bishop and priest; they carry Christ's compassion to the forgotten corners of society and ensure that the needy receive practical help.[21] Through their role in the liturgy, deacons bring the concerns and petitions of the wider community, within which they minister day by day, to the heart of the Church's worship, in order that these concerns may be laid upon the altar and placed at the foot of the cross (*Common Worship* spells out the role that it is appropriate for deacons to take at the Eucharist). Deacons can cross boundaries, from a parish base, into the 'fresh expressions' dimension of the mixed economy church. Deacons thus share in the apostolic ministry, being sent by Christ, through the Church as missionaries to carry forward his saving work.

Most clergy will be deacons for not more than a year before they (not cease to be deacons but) receive ordination to the priesthood. The so-called 'transitional diaconate' – though a misnomer, because the ordained never transit the diaconate – is an opportunity for the ordained minister to discover and live out in practice what it means to be conformed to the Deacon Jesus Christ, to partake of his apostolic calling and to be entrusted with the stewardship of the mystery of the gospel. It is a unique

opportunity to engage in primary pastoral work with a missionary intent and with an anchor in the liturgy before the additional responsibilities and constraints of priesthood and, soon afterwards for most, the cure of souls in incumbency or the equivalent, supervenes. The Church of England could well ask itself whether one year devoted solely to diaconal ministry is really enough. Some of the momentum for the renewal of the diaconate comes from a bad conscience that justice is not being done to the diaconal calling. Distinctive deacons tell us from experience that you cannot know the fullness of diaconal ministry after only a year. Ordinands might well resist the suggestion that they should spend more than a year as deacons: everything they have imbibed tells them that the diaconate is not particularly important and that the Church needs eucharistic presidents. If ordained later in life, they may well feel impatient that arrival at their goal is being delayed. This cluster of perceptions needs to be challenged. If the diaconate is indeed fundamental, nothing is more important and time spent discovering what it means in practice is time well spent. If the diaconate is a full and equal calling, any impatience to move on to something supposedly more advanced is misplaced. Pragmatic arguments, that arise from late vocations, to shorten formal training, to curtail the diaconal period, etc., are unworthy of this high calling. The rediscovery of the meaning of *diakonia* has implications for the so-called 'transitional' diaconate as well as for the distinctive diaconate. The Church of England could ask itself how it can do justice to this calling and take it more seriously, in selection, training and deployment.

The ecumenical renewal of the diaconate owes a good deal to the impetus that the Second Vatican Council gave to the recovery of this form of ordained ministry. The Council saw the diaconate as a ministry vitally necessary to the life of the church. It

promoted the 'permanent' diaconate as a way of ensuring that the essential tasks of the diaconal ministry would be carried out. The number of 'permanent deacons' is currently on the increase in the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales; it provides a location for ordained married men who cannot progress to the priesthood, but that is not its only rationale. The Methodist Church has an ordained distinctive diaconate that is constituted as a religious order. Anglicans tend to speak, not of a 'permanent', but of a 'distinctive' or 'vocational' diaconate, since a vocation can be further discerned and can be reshaped to open the possibility of ordination to the priesthood. (There is an important sense, of course, in which all deacons are 'permanent', because priests do not cease to be deacons.) The distinctive diaconate is a recognized vocation and distinctive deacons exist within the Church of England. This is an inward calling that may be discerned by the bishop and his advisers where a candidate has a calling and aptitude for a life-long ministry that is inextricably related to the word, the sacraments and pastoral care, but is suited more to an assisting than to a presiding role in relation to both the sacraments and the leadership of the community. The distinctive diaconate is particularly appropriate where an individual feels strongly drawn to the missionary, go-between ministry, seeking out the lost sheep and bringing both the message of the gospel and the practical care that goes with it to the unchurched and, therefore, may be reluctant to proceed to priesthood with its additional responsibilities and constraints. The distinctive diaconate appears to be suited to those with an evangelistic gift, provided this is clearly related to the three basic dimensions of ministry, tied into the liturgy and directed towards the full sacramental initiation of new converts. The Ordained Pioneer Ministry that is now being developed in the Church of England appears to lend itself to the ministry of deacons. As those who cross boundaries, make connections and bring people together,

deacons are well placed to move into the challenging new contexts, with their network relationships, of mission and evangelization, that we have acknowledged in the previous chapter.

Drawing on the fresh interpretation of the New Testament language of *diakonia* and *diakonos* that we have considered earlier, we can say that diaconal ministry, like all ministries, embodies God's saving purpose in the world, that is to say, becomes an agent of the kingdom of God. The deacon is invested with authority from Christ in his or her ordination. The deacon is not set apart for humble service any more than any other Christian, lay or ordained, and is not expected to exhibit humility more than anyone else! All Christians are called to present themselves a living sacrifice for Christ's sake (Romans 12.1). But a deacon is a person on a mission, a messenger or ambassador – making connections between liturgy and pastoral need, building bridges between the life of the Church and those who are not yet within it. The ministry of the deacon says something important about the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ and is indeed a sign of what the whole Church essentially is and is called to become more and more. Picking up the language of the House of Bishops' report on *Eucharistic Presidency* (1997), we can say that the diaconal ministry, like the ministry of the priest and the bishop, 'promotes, releases and clarifies' what is true of the Church as such. The ordination of a deacon may be regarded, therefore, as an ecclesial sign – a visible sign of what is true of the Church, of its essential calling, and is carried out in many ways by all the faithful and particularly by those who are called to a recognized ministry, lay as well as ordained. In ordination the deacon receives a distinctive identity from God through the Church. That identity relates to the kingdom or reign of God that has dawned upon the world in the mission of Jesus Christ, but

remains to be fulfilled, and it points to the role of the Church in the coming of God's kingly reign. Jesus Christ himself is the embodiment of the kingdom, the kingdom in person (*autobasileia*), as Origen put it. And it is Christ who holds together lay and ordained (deacon, priest and bishop) in one communion with all the people who belong to the Lord (*laos*). Jesus Christ is the archetypal baptized one, who pioneered our baptism at the Jordan, as well as the archetypal deacon, priest and bishop; being designated all these in Scripture.

That is why the distinctive diaconal identity is true of the whole Church and of all its ministries. It is true of presbyters and bishops, as well as of deacons. The threefold ministry is given to embody in a visible, public and representative way what is true of Christ's Church. In ordaining men and women the Church is bearing witness in a concrete way to how it understands its God-given mission in which all the faithful participate. Because Christians are made to share in Christ's threefold messianic identity, the diaconate points to the *prophetic* nature of the Church, her calling to convey the word of God to those who are meant to hear it. The presbyterate points to the *priestly* nature of the Church, her reconciling ministry through the authoritative word of forgiveness or blessing and through the sacraments as a whole. The episcopate points to the *pastoral* nature of the Church, guiding, leading, shepherding the flock of Christ. Ordained ministries embody and proclaim for all to see what is true of the whole body. Lay ministries participate in this reality according to their calling. All the faithful are marked by baptism and share in the messianic identity of Jesus as Prophet, Priest and King, an identity that he imparts to his Church because it is his Body and one with him.

The significance of sequential ordination

The interconnections between the three orders, which are received (when priesthood is added to diaconate and episcopate to priesthood) in succession, points to the logic of sequential ordination. Because the diaconate is an ecclesial sign of the fundamental commissioning of the Church as an agent and instrument of the gospel, of the apostolicity of the people of God, it is in a sense the foundation of ordained ministry. Luke uses 'apostleship' and *diakonia* interchangeably in Acts 1.25. Nothing was more fundamental to the Apostle Paul than his calling by Christ to be a *diakonos* of the gospel; the ministry he had received, to be a herald of the revelation of the mystery of salvation, was his *diakonia*. Because the diaconate is not left behind if and when a minister is ordained priest, the fundamental, all-determining character of mission and apostleship is transmitted to priests and bishops. They are no less deacons than they are priests. A presbyter is a deacon who has received priesthood. A bishop is a deacon who has received priesthood and subsequently received the grace and authority to be a chief pastor of the flock of Christ. One order is built on the other; the first is not superseded by the second, nor the second by the third. In the technical language of the Church of England's Canons: no one ordained to an order of ministry can subsequently be 'divested of the character' of that order (C 1.2), though they can temporarily lay aside – either voluntarily or by an act of church discipline – the role, the actual exercise of the functions, of the order. Seen in the light of our argument in this report, the sequential ordination that is practised in most of the historic traditions that have retained the threefold ministry, while it may not be an absolute and inflexible requirement, brings out the apostolic and missionary character of ordained ministry: the deacon in mission, the priest in mission, the bishop in mission. It has a

special relevance for our times with their urgent challenge of mission and evangelization.

Lay ministry

Identifying lay ministry

In one sense, the term 'lay ministry' is inept. There is only one ministry: the ministry of Christ through his people, the *laos* . What we mean in ordinary usage by 'lay ministry' is the ministry of Christ through his people that is carried out by baptized persons other than those who are ordained. In the previous chapter we have noted the remarkable growth of lay ministries and recognized their rich diversity. Now we look at them more closely within the theological framework that we have outlined above.[22]

When we are discussing the ministry of lay people (or the ministry of the ordained, for that matter) we should bear in mind the distinction made earlier between everyday acts of Christian discipleship, on the one hand, and specific work for the kingdom of God that is recognized and owned by the Church, on the other. The discipleship for which Christians are commissioned in their baptism includes many activities that are authentic to a Christian way of life and are required by it, but which are not specifically recognized and owned by the Church, either formally or informally, and do not need to be. These activities include numerous acts of witness and service, at home, at work and in social life, together with faithful prayer and Bible study. These are not what we have in mind when we refer to the *ministry* of lay people: they belong to their life of baptismal discipleship. We have argued that ministry is necessarily related to the triple mandate of word, sacrament and pastoral responsibility and this is, therefore, true of the ministry of lay people. While that specific ministry may not be a

lifelong vocation, may not be a role that is potentially universalizable and may not be exercised in the public eye, it must, by definition, be connected to the essential, foundational, mandated tasks of the Church.

Many lay people (other than nationally recognized ministers, such as Readers – we will turn to Reader ministry shortly) exercise a recognized ministry of the word, through say Sunday School teaching; leading preparation for baptism, confirmation and marriage; leadership of home groups, etc. They receive a ministry of the word (and are trained for it and accountable for how they exercise it), it without having oversight of that ministry, as bishops and priests do.

Lay people (again, other than Readers) are also involved in the ministry of the sacraments: for example, when they act as sponsors or Godparents for a baptism candidate, assist with the chalice at Holy Communion, serve at the altar, or prepare the altar for the Eucharist as virgers or sacristans. They may be elected as Sidesmen and Sideswomen, who help to ensure that worship is conducted in a seemly and reverend manner. With permission, lay ministers make take the sacrament to the sick and housebound. They may be involved, alongside the priests, in the ministry of sacramental healing. So lay people are closely involved in the ministry of the sacraments without having the presiding role that is restricted to priests and bishops.

Lay people are involved in the Church's ministry of pastoral responsibility: for example, when they are appointed as lay chaplains; elected as churchwardens or as members of the Parochial Church Council or to the Church's synodical structures; when they are appointed as parish visitors (especially of the sick and of new arrivals),

leaders of home groups, street wardens, etc. They share in the ministry of pastoral responsibility without having pastoral oversight, which is restricted to bishops and priests. (The oversight that is exercised collectively by the General Synod and by diocesan synods is not the pastoral oversight of individuals or parishes, but the sharing of responsibility for the life and mission of the Church, including its legal and financial aspects. The House of Bishops, with its special responsibility for doctrine, worship and ministry, consults with the Houses of Clergy and Laity on those matters, seeks their consent, and cannot determine the policy of the Church without them.)

In all these ways, whenever they engage in work for the kingdom that is somehow recognized and owned by the Church, and is not self-originated and self-authorized, lay people receive the ministry of Christ the Lord of the Church. They act as representatives of Christ and the Church and are caught up in the Church's part in the *missio dei*. Lay people are fully involved in the ordering of the Church to mission and ministry. The ministry of the Church, as the expression of the mission it has received from God, is not the sole prerogative of the clergy. It could not possibly be carried out by the clergy alone, without the involvement of the laity. It is, after all, the ministry of Christ in his whole body. It is the privilege of every Christian that they may be called to such a role. We cannot presume on it or assign it to ourselves, but we should prepare ourselves by prayer, study and a disciplined life to be called to ministry, over and above our daily walk of Christian discipleship.

Authorized lay ministry

Many forms of lay ministry have blossomed in recent years, as the gifts and callings of the laity have been recognized and encouraged in many dioceses and parishes, with

support from the national structures. All ministries, by definition, need to be acknowledged somehow by the Church, whether formally or informally. As we have noted in Chapter 1, there are various levels of such recognition: parochial, diocesan and national. The level of authorisation is determined by the nature and scope of a particular ministry and the degree of authority that accrues to it: for example, there is a catholicity that belongs to Reader ministry, as an ancient office, that makes it appropriate for it to be canonically recognised and nationally regulated. Ministries that are recognized and regulated at the national level (by the Church of England organized as a whole, in its Canons and other legislation) are described as Authorized Ministries. It counts for a good deal that not only ordained ministry, but also lay ministry is authorized by the Church of England as such. Authorization means that a particular lay ministry or office is not peculiar to a diocese or a benefice, but is recognized as a ministry or office that belongs to the Church as a whole. The same conditions apply across the board with regard to duties and responsibilities, selection, training and oversight. Among authorized lay ministries, the ancient and distinguished offices of churchwarden and Reader stand out.

Churchwardens

Churchwardens are senior lay officers in the parish. Although churchwardens are not always the first to spring to mind when lay ministry is spoken about, theirs is undoubtedly a ministry in our terms. Their canonical duties (Canon E 1) clearly indicate that they are engaged in specific work for the kingdom of God that is recognized by the Church. They are bishop's officers in the parish (and are admitted to office by the bishop or his substitute and give an account to the bishop or archdeacon at their Visitation). But they are representatives of the parishioners as well

as of the bishop. They look to the parish priest, as well as to the bishop and the laity, since they are required to 'be foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent'. Like the incumbent, they carry out their ministry on behalf of the bishop. As well as maintaining 'order and decency' in the church and churchyard and taking responsibility for the property of the parish, 'they shall use their best endeavours by example and precept to encourage the parishioners in the practice of true religion and to promote unity and peace among them.'

Churchwardens are the unsung heroes of the Church of England. They carry considerable burdens and deserve more appreciation than they feel they sometimes receive. Many parishes seem not to be aware of the proper scope of churchwardens' duties and probably not all wardens are familiar with the impressive description of their ministry given in the Canons. It is not uncommon for parishes to experience difficulty in finding suitable candidates for election to this office. Perhaps, if the authentic ministerial character of churchwardenship were to be more widely acknowledged, their office would be as popular as that of Reader!

Reader ministry

The office of Reader goes back to the early Church and remains a vibrant one today when there are more active Readers than stipendiary clergy and their role is probably broader and more varied than ever before. As we have already seen, the duties of Readers have varied over time. In the early third century, for example, Readers expounded the Scriptures and preached. In the reformed English Church, Readers were authorized to read Morning and Evening Prayer, but not to preach. They were permitted to conduct the Burial Service and the service for the 'Churching' of women

after childbirth. The bishops of the Church of England decided in 1866 that Readership would continue to be a lay ministry (to which candidates would be admitted by prayer and the giving of a Bible, but without the laying on of hands) whose duties were 'to render general aid to the clergy in all ministrations not strictly requiring the aid of one in Holy Orders', to read the Lessons in church, and to pray, read and explain the Scriptures elsewhere in the parish.

During the past century and a half the ministry of Readers has proved invaluable and has developed accordingly. Canon E 4 begins the list of Readers' duties with visiting the sick and reading and praying with them, teaching in Sunday School, and generally undertaking pastoral and educational work in the parish under the guidance of the incumbent. The Canon then goes on to include: reading Morning and Evening Prayer (except the Absolution), publishing Banns, reading the Scriptures, preaching, catechising; and, at Holy Communion receiving the offerings and distributing the sacrament. Readers may also conduct funerals, if authorized by the Bishop to do so, provided the goodwill of the relatives is forthcoming.

What is noticeably not entrusted to Readers by Canon, apart from presiding at the Eucharist, is celebrating the sacrament of baptism (except in a pastoral emergency, when any lay person who intends to do what the Church does may baptize) and officiating at marriages. The bishop remains the principal minister of the sacraments (Canon C 18) and only presbyters/priests share with the bishop in sacramental presidency, whether at baptism or at the Eucharist (though the Book of Common Prayer makes provision for deacons to baptize in particular circumstances). Any

minister in Holy Orders may officiate at the solemnization of Matrimony, under proper authority, and this is included in the ministry of deacons.

Readers comprise a vital resource for the Church's work today. Their numbers are buoyant; their training is thorough. Readers are qualified and commissioned to work closely with the clergy, assisting them in parochial ministry. Their ministry is liturgical, homiletical and pastoral. Readers belong within the publically acknowledged and accountable ministry of the Church and their ministry is representative of Christ and his Church. Yet theirs remains a lay ministry, an office, rather than an order, and most Readers value highly their lay identity. It is important that certain lay people should have a theologically informed ministry and should articulate the faith in a public and representative way. Readers are not admitted to their ministry in the sacramental way, through the laying on of hands, that clergy are, and theirs is not a lifelong identity in the way that ordained ministry is. Their licence has to be frequently renewed. Nevertheless, Reader ministry, as it has evolved, is pushing at the boundaries of lay ministry and this has raised the question for some of whether Readers should be ordained in order that the scope and value of their work may be more fully recognized and that it may be extended. The question whether Reader ministry should become assimilated to ordained ministry requires some discussion of the issue of the overlap of functions. But before we do that, we need to consider Church Army Evangelists and lay pastoral assistants.

Church Army Evangelists

Like Readers, Church Army Evangelists, or officers, have a lay ministry that is nationally recognized and regulated and are licensed by the diocesan bishop. The

Church Army, founded by Prebendary Wilson Carlisle in 1882, is committed to evangelistic outreach outside church buildings, reaching deep into the community. Its 350 Evangelists are involved in local area evangelism and church planting as well as being at the forefront of 'fresh expressions' of the Church's ministry and mission. They are involved in chaplaincy in prisons, hospitals and the armed services. Church Army officers do not have the liturgical and preaching-teaching role that Readers have: their task is evangelization and they work with the unchurched as far as possible. Though stretched in terms of deployment, they are in the front line of the Church's gospel mission. They are now recognized as lay pioneer ministers.

Lay pastoral assistants

Lay pastoral (or parish) assistants (LPAs) have burgeoned under a number of titles in recent years. They are perhaps the most recent expression of the recognized pastoral work by lay people that has been a vital feature of the Church's mission through the centuries. Religious orders and communities, charitable societies and missionary organizations gave scope to lay people to be involved in the front line of the Church's mission. Many city parishes in the second half of the nineteenth century had teachers, nurses and poor-visitors on their staff; sisterhoods and orders of deaconesses and of nurses flourished. Early in the twentieth century, national co-ordination and training emerged for women's pastoral work. Today an increasing number of parishes (often grouped by team ministry or deanery) employ youth workers and evangelists. But most LPAs are volunteers.

LPAs work with the parish clergy in visiting and other forms of pastoral care, by assisting at the liturgy or as members of local worship teams. Some parishes have

introduced elders or other forms of acknowledged leaders of house groups and LPAs may find a role here. Then there are lay people working formally outside the parish structures, as lay chaplains or chaplains' assistants in hospitals, prisons and in schools and colleges. Diocesan or ecumenical social concern bodies employ adoption officers or other lay people working in areas of pastoral support.

LPAs have a ministry that is recognized locally and approved by the bishop. Although there is not a national policy for the selection, training, commissioning and in-service support of LPAs, the dioceses provide guidelines and support structures for clergy and PCCs to help them to set up an LPA scheme or local ministry team. There are pitfalls in this area for which clergy need guidance.

The commissioning that LPAs receive is usually time-limited and locally circumscribed. Nevertheless, there is some functional overlap with Reader ministry, especially in liturgical and pastoral activities. In some dioceses LPAs train alongside Readers. Both operate under the direction of the incumbent. But generally the emphasis in the selection and training of LPAs is more on practical and inter-personal skills and less on theological study and the ability to communicate clearly. The ministry of LPAs should not be purely internal to the worshipping congregation and its immediate penumbra – it is all too easy for all who work on behalf of the parish to be sucked into a cycle of 'congregational' activities that leaves no room or energy for evangelism – but through parish visiting should, help to extend the missionary outreach of the Church into areas that it seldom reaches.

Conclusion

The problem of overlap in ministry

We have now looked, in this chapter, at ministry in general, distinguishing it from everyday discipleship and defining it by reference to specific tasks, undertaken in the cause of the kingdom of God, that are assigned or at least recognized by the Church. We have considered ordained and lay ministries – not only in terms of their respective functions (which would, on its own, be an inadequate and rather reductionist approach), but also in terms of their theological rationale in the mind and intention of the Church as that has evolved from New Testament times. We have laid the groundwork for some recommendations in our final chapter. But first we need to return to the issue of overlap in ministry, which is the cause, or occasion, of anxiety or frustration for some.

For some people, the obvious fact that there is overlap of function between the various ministries of the Church, ordained and lay, poses a difficulty. Perhaps they look at deacons and at Readers and see that they carry out very much the same set of tasks: preaching and teaching, assisting with the sacraments, bringing pastoral care. The fact that Readers do not baptize (except in an emergency when, according to the Catholic tradition, anyone who intends to do what the Church does may baptize) and do not officiate at the solemnization of a marriage, does not count for much with some, but is certainly not insignificant.

In our view, too much can be made of the phenomenon of overlap. The fact is that overlap is endemic in ministry. For example, presbyters and bishops have ministries that, while they are distinctive, overlap in various ways with each other and with the

ministry of deacons. So do Readers and pastoral assistants, Readers and churchwardens, and so on. Ordained ministry overlaps with lay ministry. This need not present a problem, provided there is clarity about what the Church expects from its various ministers and provided its ministers work in a collaborative and collegial manner. Overlap is inescapable because the mission – the cluster of tasks – entrusted to the Church is an integrated and structured whole, not a random assortment of discrete functions. Ministries are distinctive but not mutually exclusive. The ministries of the Church interpenetrate because they all serve a single goal. However, interpenetration – overlap – is one thing, but confusion is another, and the Church must decide what it wants from its ministries and which should be regarded as ordained and which should remain lay, and on what criteria. This document is, of course, intended to be helpful to that end.

Because all ministries, ordained and lay, are theologically differentiated but ordered to a common goal within the mission of God that is at work through the Church, they are necessarily interdependent. Ministries are complementary; they enrich and support each other within the divine economy and should, therefore, be carried out in a collaborative way. You cannot 'go solo' in ministry or act as though 'I have no need of you' (1 Corinthians 12.21). The deepest reason for a collaborative approach to ministry is missiological and ecclesiological. Christ ministers to us through our fellow ministers and to others through us acting together.

As we look at the range of recognized ministries, ordained and lay, in the Church of England and at our Canons and Ordinals that help to define these, it seems that there

are three criteria that, taken together, enable us to distinguish lay and ordained ministries. We should ask of a given form of ministry

- Does this ministry involve a lifelong commitment that permanently marks a person, not only subjectively but in their public identity?
- Is this ministry recognized and regulated at least nationally and is it, potentially and in the intention of the ordaining church, interchangeable in churches throughout the world?
- Is it a comprehensive ministry, embracing word, sacrament and pastoral care?

A particular authorized lay ministry may perhaps meet one or possibly two of these criteria, but an ordained ministry must meet all of them. The ministry of Readers comes closest to doing this. It is often a lifelong calling, though not necessarily so. Although a solemn commission is given in a liturgical context, it cannot be said (as is often said of ordination) that this is a sacramental act: it lacks the Church's intention to ordain through the laying on of hands with prayer. Reader ministry is, of course, nationally recognized and is transferable across dioceses (though not automatically), but the question of ecumenical interchangeability does not normally arise. Readers do indeed relate in certain ways to the three dimensions of the Church's mission and ministry – the word (by preaching and teaching), the sacraments (by assisting *ex officio* at the distribution of the sacrament) and pastoral care – and it is this fact that raises the question of whether some Readers should be encouraged to seek ordination to the diaconate and so receive the authority to administer baptism and to solemnize marriages (and to officiate at funerals *ex officio*, i.e. without the current canonical restriction that the goodwill of the relatives of the deceased must be forthcoming). So

Reader ministry does not fully meet all the criteria, but it does inhabit, in the perception of many, something of a grey area between lay and ordained ministry. We return to this issue in our Conclusions and Recommendations.

Chapter 5

Summary and recommendations

Why this document, from this body, at this time? In its constitutional role as an advisory body to the Council for Christian Unity and the House of Bishops, the Faith and Order Advisory Group (FOAG) has to deal with a wide range of questions related to the theology of ministry in the Christian Church. Naturally, it is primarily concerned with the ecclesiological and ecumenical aspects of ministry. FOAG believes that more theological depth, clarity and coherence is needed in the Church of England's thinking on the nature of the ministry in the Church, whether ordained or lay. It therefore welcomed the request to undertake the follow up work to the earlier report of a working party of the House of Bishops, *For Such a Time as This: A Renewed Diaconate in the Church of England* (2001). As we have noted, that report was referred back by the General Synod, for further work to be done on authorized lay ministries in relation to the diaconate.

The present study document takes its place within the broad sweep of FOAG's work on ministry matters (which has, for example, recently included a substantial statement on lay presidency at the Eucharist). It includes, though it is not confined to, an attempt to address the further work requested by the Synod. We have attempted to respond to the concern of the Synod that more extensive consideration of authorized lay ministries should be undertaken. We did not set out to provide a systematic and comprehensive theology of ministry and ordination, or to give an exhaustive analysis of our social and cultural context. We are conscious that we have not been able to do justice to the range of recent missiological studies. We are not concerned with structural or organizational questions, or with issues of deployment, though our

argument certainly has implications for how the ordained and lay ministers of the Church might be most effectively used.

In order to do justice to the issues in the Synod's request, we were convinced that first of all we needed to go back to fundamentals – to examine what is meant in Scripture and tradition by ministry; to look at the meaning of ordination; to study the diaconate in relation to presbyteral and episcopal ministries; and to set the whole discussion in the light of the mission imperative, called forth with fresh urgency by our present culture and society. Only on this foundation could we consider the overall economy of the Church's role in the Mission of God (*missio dei*) and in particular the place of the ordained diaconate and of authorized lay ministries in this.

Our introductory chapter raised a number of questions to be take up in the body of the text, including the following:

- What principles concerning ministry can be learned from the New Testament?
- How might these principles be applied today?
- What is the nature of the distinction between ordained and lay ministry?
- Are the existing divisions of function between the various forms of ministry justified or do they need to be reconsidered?
- How do ordained and lay ministries complement each other?
- Do the functional differences between ordained diaconal ministry and nationally recognized lay ministries justified their continued existence as distinct forms of ministry?

We have done our best to respond to these questions. In the previous chapter we have set out three criteria that serve to distinguish ordained and lay ministries from each other. We have also discussed the prevailing functional approach to ministry and the issue of overlap to which it gives rise. We have argued that overlap is endemic and inevitable in Christian ministry, because the Church carries out the tasks that God has given her. Her ministers contribute to the same set of tasks according to their callings. If we ask: What is the difference between ordained and lay ministry?, the short, but apparently flippant answer is that one is ordained and the other is not. We need to understand the meaning of ordination in order to see that this rather annoying answer actually hits the nail on the head. Ordination makes a particular ministry a public ecclesial sign of what the whole Church is. It focuses, clarifies and promotes the calling of all the faithful who are constituted by baptism as a royal, prophetic priesthood.

The third chapter set out some aspects of the changing context of ministry in the Church of England and the wider world and showed that ours is now a missionary context, in which the various ministries of the Church must be shaped by the mission imperative, especially the priority of evangelization. We recognized the need for Christian communities that would help to make the gospel credible and plausible to those presently outside the Church and we affirmed the importance of new forms of church community (fresh expressions of the Church). The ministries of bishops, priests and deacons, of Readers, Church Army Evangelists, churchwardens and lay pastoral assistants must all be shaped by mission and geared to evangelization. The clergy, assisted by these key lay ministers, must re-invent themselves as apostles to the unchurched. Life in our dioceses and parishes, our cathedrals and parish churches

and chapels must be structured, organized and orientated in such a way that reaching out to those who are currently not within the fold becomes the priority.

The second chapter provided a close study of the meaning of 'ministry' (*diakonia*) in the New Testament and gave an assessment of the contribution made by John N. Collins to the meaning of this pivotal term. It became clear that *diakonia* in both classical and New Testament Greek stands for a range of activities, from service at table to a high-level ambassadorial role, but that what unites them all is that the task is mandated by a person in authority. *Diakonia* is thus a commissioned activity, role or task, in which the *diakonos* is the responsible agent of the one who sends or who gives the mandate. This insight informed the development of the diaconate in the early Church, where the deacon often carried out duties on behalf of the bishop, but it has been eclipsed in recent decades by a rhetorical appeal to 'humble service' on the part of deacons. It has not always been clear that, while deacons, like all Christians and all ministers, are indeed servants, they are servants first of the Lord who sends, then of the Church through whom he sends, but not servants in the sense of being at the disposal of all and sundry, simply a function of the needs of those around them.

To be true to the *diakonia* that the New Testament speaks of (especially in Paul's letters, but also in Luke-Acts), we need to affirm that deacons embody the fundamental commissioning of Christ to the Church, given particularly in Matthew 28.16-20 ('The Great Commission'). This is a commission that is given precisely in terms of the ministry of the word (in preaching and teaching), of the sacraments (especially baptism and the Eucharist) and of pastoral responsibility and care. Deacons play their distinctive part, in the way that the Church seeks to carry out this

commission, in an assisting, not a presiding role, working closely with the bishop and the presbyter. As those who are sent, deacons have an ineradicable missionary role which is fulfilled as they reach out to the unchurched, especially those in special need (whether physical or spiritual), and help to draw them and their concerns into the heart of the baptismal and eucharistic life of the Church.

In Chapter 4 we attempted to set out some groundwork for a theology of ministry, ordained and lay. The first step was to place the mission of the Church in the context of the mission of God. It is the whole Church that plays a part in God's loving purpose of bringing the blessings of the gospel to all humankind, with consequences for all creation. The mission of God through the Church takes the form of a ministry. This ministry is not a blank sheet of paper, which the Church can fill with whatever it feels moved to do in God's name, but is determined by the mandate given by the risen Christ in the New Testament. This mandate or commission is specifically to proclaim and communicate the gospel and to teach the faith; to celebrate the sacraments of the New Covenant and to underpin it all with a compassionate pastoral care and oversight. As always, this is set within the framework of the coming of God's kingdom of justice and peace, healing and wholeness of life.

We then went on in the previous chapter, to distinguish the carrying out of this basic mandate of ministry from everyday Christian discipleship. We suggested that such language as 'Monday morning ministry' or 'ministry in the home', to refer to a Christian's daily walk of discipleship, their witness and acts of charity, is not helpful. A term is needed to mark out the core tasks of the Church, and those who are commissioned to carry them out, from the life of Christian discipleship that should

characterize all Christians at all times. Ministry, we propose, refers to specific God-given work for the kingdom of God, work that is assigned or acknowledged by the Church. This ministry is fundamentally Christ's, not our own. It is representative of Christ and the Church (or of Christ in the Church). It is always related to the essential tasks of the Church. It embraces ordained and lay. All ministries are full and equal ministries: there is no hierarchy of value in the eyes of God. Ministry belongs to the ordering of the Church, so that even ministry that is not within Holy Orders, is nevertheless ordered by God to the mission of the Church.

We then went on in the previous chapter to consider first ordained ministry, sketching out the respective roles and responsibilities of bishops, priests and deacons. We drew attention to the fact that the Church of England, like most other churches with a Catholic threefold order, practises sequential or cumulative ordination, so that a priest remains a deacon and a bishop remains a deacon and a priest. We believe that the reconstructed understanding of *diakonia*, for which we argue, helps to make sense of the rule of sequential ordination: the diaconate is the foundation of all ordained ministry because it embodies in a particular person the fundamental commissioning of the whole Church and of all its members by the risen Christ.

We then considered lay ministry, pointing out that it too is necessarily related to the triple task of the Church, that of word, sacrament and pastoral care. These comprise the content and focus of lay ministry, though they are worked out in many ways and in diverse contexts. We noted that certain lay ministries are recognized by the Church of England at the national level and we went on to give closer consideration to churchwardens, Readers, Church Army Evangelists and lay pastoral assistants. We

concluded the previous chapter by looking at the issue of overlap in ministry, arguing that, in their substantive content, the various ministries of the Church are distinctive, but not exclusive.

On the basis of our overall theological reflection, we come now to our recommendations.

Lay pastoral assistants

The General Synod motion that, in part, gave rise to this piece of work referred to lay pastoral assistants. This was the only category of lay ministry that is not authorized or regulated at the national level by canon to be mentioned in the motion. We recognize and affirm the various forms of lay pastoral (or parish) assistants, worship leaders and other members of local ministry teams that have burgeoned and blossomed in the Church of England in recent years. We believe that the theological framework that we have set out provides some underpinning for this welcome development. Every baptized Christian may be called by the Church to a specific ministry: pastoral assistants are called by the Church at the level of the parish or benefice, though their training and deployment may be covered by diocesan guidelines. They play a vital part in the delivery of the mission of God through the Church at the very local level because, as we have seen, pastoral care is one of the mandated tasks of the Church. Pastoral assistants themselves, the clergy who oversee and guide their work, and the diocesan vocations advisers who promote the calling to this and other expressions of ministry need a clear understanding of the rationale, scope and limits of this form of lay ministry.

Churchwardens

We have highlighted the ministry of churchwardens, even though they were not specifically mentioned in the General Synod motion. It is clear to us that churchwardens meet our criterion for ministry: they carry out specific work for the kingdom of God that is recognized by the Church (indeed mandated by Canon). They provide the very local framework for ministry and, in a sense, enable it to happen. Churchwardens act in support of the bishop, the incumbent and the parishioners. They are vital to the overall mission-ministry that is conducted through the parish. (We wonder whether the various fresh expressions and the mission communities that are covered by a bishop's mission order, will be blessed with wise and dedicated lay officers, in the same way, who will support and advise the leaders of the initiative and also have a loyalty and responsibility to the bishop?) The tens of thousands of churchwardens, throughout the Church of England, outnumber stipendiary clergy, Readers and every other form of canonical ministry put together. It is essential that churchwardens of the requisite calibre continue to be available for local leadership in the parishes. In practice, it is not always easy to find suitable churchwardens. Those who are elected are not always fully informed about their canonical duties and the rationale behind them. Perhaps, if churchwardens received greater appreciation and support, their office would become as sought-after as that of Reader.

Church Army Evangelists

We have acknowledged and affirmed the sterling work done by the Evangelists of the Church Army in reaching out beyond the buildings and boundaries of the Church to those who are generally untouched by its regular ministrations. How do Church Army Evangelists match up to our definition of ministry? There can be no question that

theirs is specific work for the kingdom of God that is recognized by the Church. In terms of our three criteria that distinguish ordained from lay ministry, they are certainly ministers of the word and of pastoral care within the particular context in which they operate, but they are not normally involved in assisting with the sacraments. They are nationally recognized, having a canonical ministry, covered by Canon E 7 on Lay Workers (and are actually stipendiary), but notwithstanding the personal dedication of the officers, theirs is not necessarily a lifelong calling and identity. On our premises, it makes eminent sense for Church Army Evangelists to be lay ministers. There may be circumstances where it would be appropriate for an Evangelist to be ordained as a (distinctive) deacon, but general policy on this question is for the Church Army to decide and particular cases will be decided at the bishop's discretion. If approached with a request to ordain an Evangelist, the bishop would need to be satisfied that his or her ministry would be a sacramental one, in addition to the ministry of the word and of pastoral care that they already exercise, and that their calling was to a lifelong identity. Church Army Evangelists are pioneers in the Church's mission, taking some of the key tasks of the Church beyond ecclesiastical boundaries –which is where they are meant to go – and thus preparing the way in the wilderness of unbelief or unformed faith for the Lord who builds his Church. The mission of God through the Church in this land would be enhanced if there were many more Church Army Evangelists. When the work of lay pioneer ministers is being considered, the role of Church Army Evangelists should not be overlooked.

Readers

We believe that the canonical ministry of Readers should be affirmed as an ancient, honourable and vital lay ministry that has the potential to find new paths of mission.

The Church of England is extremely fortunate in having as lay ministers the large, well-trained and dedicated body of Readers, who (like self-supporting clergy) give their services voluntarily. They are the mainstay of many a parish, officiating at Morning and Evening Prayer, assisting at the Eucharist, and carrying out many tasks of a pastoral nature. They should be regarded as trusted colleagues by the clergy and be fully integrated into local ministry teams. As well as their essential role in parochial ministry, Readers can play a significant part in the new developments that go under the heading fresh expressions of church. Their continuing ministerial education in the dioceses can give them new tools for this challenge. There seems to be no good reason why some Readers, with the right aptitudes and gifts, should not be selected and given the necessary preparation to be designated lay pioneer ministers.

We also believe that some Readers, again with the appropriate aptitudes and gifts, should be encouraged to have their vocation further discerned with a view to further training for ordination as deacons. There is a well-worn path from Readership to ordination and a steady trickle of vocations. Our support for this route is not meant to be prescriptive, but permissive: there will be some Readers for whom this is an appropriate step and others for whom it would not be right. This route makes sense in terms of the ministry that is given to Readers. As we have seen, of all authorized lay ministries, Readers approximate most to ordained ministry, according to the criteria that we have proposed. First, they relate to the essential tasks of the Church. Their canonical ministry links them with the ministry of the word (Readership in its modern form is at heart a teaching ministry), the sacraments (though more tenuously) and pastoral care (but not pastoral charge or oversight). They help to consolidate the mission-ministry that is given to the Church. Second, Readers constitute a nationally

recognized and accredited ministry, though not one that is potentially and in principle interchangeable ecumenically. So, with regard to the remaining criterion, that of life-long public identity: where a Reader has a strong sense of life-long commitment, his or her vocation could be further tested. It may be that, after suitable preparation, ordination to the diaconate would be the right step. This would enlarge their ministry, in terms of baptism and officiating at marriages; the major pastoral opportunity of conducting funerals would become ex officio. The candidate would be incorporated into a ministry that is an ecclesial sign, a 'sacramental' embodiment of the nature and mission of the Church. For some, diaconal ministry would be an ongoing commitment: their ministry would find its fulfilment in the distinctive diaconate. For others, the diaconate would lead, perhaps after a period of several years, to ordination to the presbyterate. A pro-active discernment of the vocation of some Readers, by bishops and diocesan staff, could lead to a significant harvest of ordinands, especially for the distinctive diaconate.

At the present time, some Readers are experiencing a crisis of morale: they are feeling squeezed between their ordained colleagues, on the one hand, and the upsurge of local expressions of lay ministry, on the other. Some Readers, it seems, would not welcome any encouragement of a distinctive diaconate, seeing the ministry of deacons as too close to their own for comfort. We do not think that a solution to this difficulty, which has been identified by Readers themselves, lies in an enlargement of the canonical duties of Readers. We do not support any extension of Reader ministry into the area of celebration of the sacraments. Presidency at the sacraments of Christian initiation and the Eucharist belongs to the bishop, and the bishop shares this collegially with presbyters, who are specifically ordained to this role, and who are assisted in the

ministry of sacraments by deacons. Readers do not have baptism within their canonical ministry, and the Church of England and the Anglican Communion as a whole does not accept lay presidency at the Eucharist.[1]

All the given ministries of the Church should be affirmed and supported – and where necessary, reformed. The challenge of mission and evangelization requires the best efforts of all our ministerial resources. Christian ministry is not a competition and the 'success' of one ministry is not achieved at the expense of another. We believe that Readers have an estimable ministry, one that is still needed in its traditional form, and which has the capacity to evolve further in a missionary direction. Reader ministry should be valued and affirmed by clergy and laity alike.

Deacons

We believe that the diaconate should be taken much more seriously in the light of the theology summarized in this report. We need to locate the diaconate more centrally in the overall mission of the Church and thus to correct the prevailing assumption that the diaconate is merely a transitional year before priesting, an apprenticeship for the priesthood, and that it is the latter that really matters. The fact that, generally speaking, deacons are a little impatient to be ordained priest – though with some sense of trepidation, we trust – perhaps reflects the main emphasis hitherto, in selection, training and deployment, on the presbyterate. But if *diakonia* is what we have suggested it is, one cannot live into it and be formed in it in a short time.

If this study document is widely used, it will help the Church to recognize that there is merit in the reconstructed theology of the diaconate, grounded in fresh New

Testament research. Let it not be said that the whole case rests on the views of one scholar about the meaning of *diakon-* words in the Greek New Testament. It is evident to any careful reader, who is prepared to compare translations and to use a reference book or two, that some modern English translations of the New Testament have concealed, rather than revealed, the force of what Paul and Luke are saying about *diakonia* as a responsible stewardship, involving proclamation, of the mystery of God's revelation in Christ, the heart of the apostolic commission. And let it not be said that these views on New Testament interpretation are particularly speculative or contestable: as the research that underlies our report indicates and documents, John Collins' ground breaking research has not been fundamentally challenged by his peers, let alone refuted (though it has been misrepresented).[2]

In particular cases, taking to heart the ideas that we have advanced may lead to bishops requiring individuals to spend more than the currently normative one year as a deacon, in order to live more fully into that calling. Selection at diocesan and national levels and training in colleges and on courses will be focused more than it generally does on the calling of a deacon and ordination to that order, rather than tending to take the diaconal period for granted and focusing almost entirely on the priesthood.

We also believe that the distinctive diaconate should be actively encouraged. If the General Synod welcomes this report, it will be giving a signal to bishops, diocesan staff, clergy, bishops' selectors – and not least to individuals prayerfully considering a vocation – that ministry as a distinctive (that is to say, on-going, though not necessarily permanent) deacon is one that the Church of England recognizes and

honours. Then the distinctive diaconate will become more widely recognized as a valid calling. This can be followed through in terms of vocations advice in the dioceses, national selection procedures and in training, where the training pathway for distinctive deacons could be more clearly and prominently signposted than it has been in the past.

The Ordinals and Canons of the Church of England already provide all that is needed in the way of official underpinning for the distinctive diaconate. No new legislation seems to be needed. The theological framework is also in place, though until recently it has gone largely unrecognized. Public recognition and encouragement by the Church as a whole is all that is needed now. We believe that such encouragement would be a timely step. The pressure in recent years to provide eucharistic presidency has militated against encouraging vocations to the distinctive diaconate. But there is now a growing realization that the top priority is to grow more Christians by reaching out to the unchurched and to those hovering on the fringes. Deacons, considered as agents of God's mission through the Church, are eminently well placed to do this within the parochial structures. However, the thinking currently going on in the fresh expressions initiative raises the possibility that deacons might also be deployed as ordained pioneer ministers and play a key role in the creation of new Christian communities.

Altogether, whether in parochial or extra-parochial contexts, the whole Church of Christ and its missionary endeavour, taking place through all its ministries, ordained and lay, needs to be 'refreshed', renewed and revived. This piece of work is intended, under God, as a theological contribution that that renewal.

Notes

Chapter 1

1 *For Such a Time as This* (GS 1407), London, Church House Publishing, 2001.

2 *General Synod Report of Proceedings*, vol. 32, no. 3, London, Church House Publishing, 2001, p. 225.

3 *General Synod Report of Proceedings*, p. 246.

4 Text in C. Hill and E. Yarnold (eds), *Anglicans and Roman Catholics: The Search for Unity*, London, SPCK/CTS, 1994, pp. 29–40.

5 *An Anglican–Methodist Covenant*, Peterborough and London, Methodist Publishing House/Church House Publishing, 2001.

6 World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1982.

Chapter 2

1 G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds), G. W. Bromiley (trans.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 10 vols, 1964–76.

2 James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, London, Oxford University Press, 1961.

3 These statistics are based on the NRSV translation but, in this instance, this translation does not differ widely from the other major translations.

4 See Matthew 20.26,28; 22.13; 23.11; 27.55; Mark 9.35; 10.43,45; Luke 10.40; 12.37; 17.8; John 2.5,9; 12.26; 22.26f.; Acts 1.17,25; 6.1,2,4; 11.29; 12.25; 19.22; 20.24; 21.19; Romans 11.13; 12.7; 13.4; 15.8,25,31; 16.1; 1 Corinthians 3.5; 12.5; 16.15; 2 Corinthians 3.3,6,7ff.; 4.1; 5.18; 6.3,4; 8.4,19f.; 9.1,12,13; 11.8,15,23; Galatians 2.17; Ephesians 3.7; 4.12; 6.21; Philippians 1.1; Colossians 1.7,23,25; 4.7,17; Philemon 1.13; 1 Timothy 1.12; 3.8,10,12,13; 4.6; 2 Timothy 4.5,11; Hebrews 1.14; 6.10; 1 Peter 4.10,11; Revelation 2.19.

5 In fact John N. Collins has demonstrated that over the past fifty years or so there has been a shift in understanding these words away from ministry and towards service. John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 5–45.

6 H. W. Beyer, 'Diakoneō, Diakonia, Diakonos', in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, pp. 81–93.

7 J. P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd edn, New York, United Bible Societies, 1989, p. 458.

8 Hans Küng, *The Church*, London, Burns & Oates, 1967, pp. 391–2.

9 Elizabeth Fiorenza, '"Waiting at Table": A Critical Feminist Theological Reflection', in *Diakonia: Church for Others*, ed. Norbert Greinacher, Norbert Mette, and James Aitken Gardiner, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1988.

10 James Monroe Barnett, *The Diaconate – a Full and Equal Order: A Comprehensive and Critical Study of the Origin, Development, and Decline of the Diaconate in the Context of the Church's Total Ministry and a Proposal for Renewal*, New York, Seabury Press, 1981, pp. 4–42.

11 Andrew D. Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1999, pp. 234–42.

12 Eduard Schweizer, 'Ministry in the Early Church', in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, New York, Doubleday, 1992.

13 World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1982, M7.

14 Collins, *Diakonia*; John N. Collins, *Are All Christians Ministers?* Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 1992, 'A Ministry for Tomorrow's Church', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 32, no. 2 (1995); 'Diakonia and the New Greek Lexicon (BDAG)' (http://www.deaconpages.org/library/LEXICON%20BDAG%20article%20by%20John%20N.%20Collins.pdf, 2001 [cited 2 February 2005]); *Contextualising Dorothea Reininger's Women Deacons* (http://www.womenpriests.org/called/collins3.asp, 2002 [cited 2 February 2005]); *Deacons and the Church: Making Connections between Old and New*, Leominster, Gracewing / Harrisburg, PA, Morehouse Pub., 2002. Collins has produced many more articles than this, these books and articles represent the major points of his argument.

15 A fuller evaluation of Collins' interpretation and the critiques of it can be found in Paula Gooder, '*Diakonia* in the New Testament: A Dialogue with John N. Collins', *Ecclesiology* 3, no. 1 (2006), pp. 33–56.

16 Collins, *Diakonia*.

17 2 Corinthians 3.7-9, words translating *diakonia* are in bold type.

18 Collins, *Diakonia*, p. 204.

19 Other examples of the use of this word in the Pauline tradition are Romans 11.13; 12.7; 13.4; 15.8,25,31; 16.1; 1 Corinthians 3.5; 12.5; 16.15; 2 Corinthians 3.3,6ff.; 4.1; 5.18; 6.3f.; 8.4,19f.; 9.1,12f.; 11.8,15,23; Galatians 2.17; Ephesians 3.7; 4.12;

6.21; Philippians 1.1; Colossians 1.7,23,25; 4.7,17; 1 Timothy 1.12; 3.8,10,12f.; 4.6; 2 Timothy 4.5,11; Philemon 1.13.

20 Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990, pp. 63–8.

21 It should be noted that although this understanding of Mark 10.45 is central to Collins' book, the case for understanding ministry more as 'agency' than as 'service' stands without it. Paul's usage of the words gives a strong enough lead in this direction regardless of how one interprets this passage.

22 Collins, *Diakonia*, pp. 230–31.

23 Collins, *Diakonia*, p. 231.

24 W. H. C. Frend, 'Review', *Theology* 94 (1991), p. 465; Leslie Houlden, 'Review', *Expository Times* 102 (1991), p. 213; Jerome Murphy O'Connor, 'Review', *Revue Biblique* 102 (1995), pp. 152–3; Timothy Radcliffe, 'Review', *The Tablet*, no. 246 (1992), pp. 865–6.

25 John Wilcken, 'Review', *Australian Catholic Record* 70 (1993), pp. 395–6; J. Robert Wright, 'Review', *Anglican Theological Review* 74 (1992), pp. 108–10.

26 Peighton Craighill, 'Review of John N. Collins *Diakonia*' (*Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 1991 [cited 27 June 2005]); available from http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/1991/02.05.06.html

27 R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, Eerdmans / Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 2002.

28 A comparison of the 2000 edition with the 1979 edition illustrates the shift that has taken place. In the 1979 edition the word range given for *diakonia* was (1) service, (2)

service necessary for the preparation of a meal, (3) esp. the office of prophets and apostles (4) aid, support, distribution, especially of alms and charitable giving (5) office of a deacon; but in the 2000 edition the range given is (1) service rendered in an intermediary capacity, mediation, assignment: mediation of this public obligation (2) performance of a service (3) functioning in the interest of a larger public, service, office of the prophets and apostles (4) rendering of specific assistance, aid, support; send someone something for support (5) an administrative function, service as attendant, aide, or assistant (English 'deacon').This comparison is derived from Collins, 'Diakonia and the New Greek Lexicon (BDAG)'.

29 For example, Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, New York, Harper & Row, 1963, p. 11.

30 One of the unhelpful features of Collins' argument is his view that the Church should be educated away from understanding the diaconate as involving loving service (John N. Collins, *Deacons and the Church*, pp. 132–5). This does not follow from the case he has made about the nature of *diakonia*. If the focus of *diakonia* is commissioned agency rather than loving service, it does not rule out the possibility that loving service could be the task to which someone is commissioned. This part of his argument seems to be arguing away from humble service as a valuable part of the Christian tradition in way that is not necessary given the rest of his position.

31 Collins, *Diakonia*, p. 258.

32 Collins, *Diakonia*, p. 259.

33 Collins, *Are All Christians Ministers?*

34 Collins, *Are All Christians Ministers?*, pp. 122–7; John N. Collins, 'Ministry as a Distinct Category among Charismata (1 Corinthians 12.4-7)', *Neotestamentica* 27, no. 1 (1993); Collins, *Deacons and the Church*, pp. 83–4.

35 See discussion in Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2000, p. 932.

36 NRSV.

37 Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 932; J. M. Barnett, 'Diaconate Defined Not by Word Study but by Early Church', *Diakoneo* 17, no. 5 (1975), pp. 2–3.

38 The crucial factor here is how the word *eis* is being used here and whether being equipped 'into ministry' implies the inevitable taking up of that ministry or just preparation for it.

39 On this matter, evidence points away from a split between the two communities, as a central part of Paul's mission was to collect money to send back to the Jerusalem church; this could hardly have happened if the communities were alienated from each other.

40 See James Tunstead Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press 1992, p. 274.

41 Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church*, p. 344.

42 Add to this the view that Diaspora synagogues often grew up modelled on the structures of Greek society and grew out of private homes and the apparent conflict of views disappears, though the diversity of early Christianity does not. See Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000.

43 See David G. Horrell, 'Leadership Patterns and the Development of Ideology in Early Christianity', in *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*,

ed. David G. Horrell, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1999, pp. 309–37, for the use of these terms.

44 See, for example, Hans Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1969; Adolf von Harnack and James Moffatt, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, Theological Translation Library, vols 19–20, London, Williams & Norgate, 1904; Horrell, 'Leadership Patterns'.

45 G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, trans. J. J. Schutz, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1982, p. 28.

46 This is the conflict that lies behind most of 2 Corinthians.

47 See discussion in Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd edn, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2003, pp. 133–4.

48 Richard Ascough interprets this as an indication that Paul allowed leadership to take the shape of the local community in which it was set. See Richard Ascough, 'The Thessalonian Christian Community as Professional Voluntary Association', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119, no. 2 (2000), pp. 311–28.

49 See, in particular, 1 Corinthians 12.8-10,28-30; Romans 12.6-8; Ephesians 4.11.

50 See R. Alastair Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity*, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1994, p. 126.

51 The evidence he cited here is the ranking of Fortunatus and Achaicus alongside Stephanas in 1 Corinthians 16.17, whom he takes to be freedmen or slaves. See Horrell, 'Leadership Patterns'.

52 Thus the 'and' is used here to mean 'who are also . . .': Dieter Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians: A Study of Religious Propaganda in Late Antiquity*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1986, p. 20.

53 Collins, *Diakonia*, p. 236.

54 Our translation and italics; the biblical quotation is from Isaiah 60.17. *1 Clement* is thought to have been written at the end of the reign of Domitian c. 96 CE.

55 The *Didache* is dated to between 70 and 160 CE, so possibly late first century or sometime in the second century.

56 Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul*, p. 20.

57 Collins, *Diakonia*, p. 236.

58 Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church*, p. 344.

59 Ignatius is thought to have been martyred between 98 and 117 CE.

60 Our translation; note that many translations choose to insert 'ministers' at * to make more sense of the text, thought this is not present in the Greek. Collins suggests that 'officer' might be a better translation of the word here, Collins, *Diakonia*, p. 362.

61 See Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians* 2.1; *Epistle to the Magnesians* 2; *Epistle to the Philadelphians* 11.1-2; and the *Epistle to Smyrna* 10.1.

62 See, for example, Acts 20.24: 'But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the **ministry** (*diakonia*) that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace.'

63 See, for example, Philippians 1.1 and 1 Timothy 3.

64 Through apostolic succession.

Chapter 3

1 World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1982, p. 24. The same point was made by Richard Hooker: 'Nor was this order peculiar unto some few churches, but the whole world universally became subject thereunto; insomuch as they did not account it to be a church that was not subject unto a bishop': *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* VII.5.3.

2 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, p. 24.

3 J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 161–2.

4 For the development of the parochial system see N. J. G. Pounds, *A History of the English Parish*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

5 *Deacons in the Ministry of the Church*, London, Church House Publishing, 1988, p. 15.

6 That is to say, they could be appointed to an ecclesiastical post (such as being the incumbent of a parish) for which they received a stipend.

7 *Deacons in the Ministry of the Church*, p. 15.

8 There was an alternative view, that was sometimes held, that saw the major orders as consisting of sub deacons, deacons and priests. According to this view of the matter the episcopate was a particular form of the priesthood.

9 For the origins and development of the office of parish clerk see O. Clark, 'The Ancient office of Parish Clerk and the Parish Clerks Company of London', *The Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, vol. 8, no. 38 (Jan. 2006), pp. 307–23.

10 For examples of these forms of lay ministry in a particular parish at the end of the mediaeval period see E. Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2001, ch. 2.

11 The Edwardian Injunctions of 1547, 11: text in G. Bray, *Documents of the English Reformation*, Cambridge, James Clarke, 1994, p. 251.

12 For these changes see Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath* and also *The Stripping of the Altars*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1992.

13 J. Ayre (ed.), *The Works of John Jewel Bishop of Salisbury*, Cambridge, Parker Society/Cambridge University Press, 1848, vol. 3, pp. 58, 59.

14 These points were expressed, for example, in the Admonition to Parliament of 1572 and the Root and Branch Petition of 1640.

15 See N. Sykes, *Old Priest and New Presbyter*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1956.

16 An exception to this change was the practice of the fellows of Oxford and Cambridge colleges, who were required to be ordained, remaining as deacons until they left their colleges to become incumbents of parishes or to take up some other ecclesiastical office.

17 For details of the evidence that the office of Reader dates back to the earliest days of the Church see T. G. King, *Readers, A Pioneer Ministry*, London, The Miss Myland Fund, 1973, pp. 48–59.

18 A. Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990.

19 N. Spencer, *Parochial Vision: The Future of the English Parish*, Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 2004, p. 34.

20 Figures in G. Kuhrt (ed.), *Ministry Issues for the Church of England*, London, Church House Publishing, 2001, p. 94.

21 Kuhrt (ed.), *Ministry Issues for the Church of England*, p. 29. See also A. Russell, *The Clerical Profession*, London, SPCK, 1980.

22 For the development of women's ministry in the Church of England see S. Gill, *Women in the Church of England*, London, SPCK, 1994. Whereas the latter two forms of ministry were indisputably lay ministries, the issue of whether the order of deaconesses was an ordained order for women was left unclear with a recommendation being made in 1935 that deaconesses should be regarded as clergy in Holy Orders. The 'continuing ambivalence' of their status is described in *Women Bishops in the Church of England? A Report of the House of Bishops' Working Party on Women in the Episcopate*, London, Church House Publishing, 2004, pp. 119–22.

23 See Gill, *Women in the Church of England*, ch. 8.

24 Figures in Kuhrt (ed.), *Ministry Issues for the Church of England*, p. 94.

25 See Kuhrt (ed.), *Ministry Issues for the Church of England*, p. 17.

26 Some parishes, such as some wealthy Evangelical urban parishes, continued to have several ordained ministers on the staff, but these are not teams of assistant curates in the old sense, but a new model in which there is an incumbent, possibly an assistant curate, and a number of associate ministers responsible for particular aspects of the ministry of the parish.

27 Kuhrt (ed.), *Ministry Issues for the Church of England*, p. 255.

28 http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/statistics/church%20statistic, 2004.

29 The term that has been traditionally used for this type of ministry is Non-Stipendiary Ministry (NSM), but this is now felt to define this ministry negatively in terms of the lack of a stipend and so the more positive term 'self-supporting ministry' is used instead.

30 In practice most self-supporting ministers have exercised an assistant ministry with limited oversight.

31 Kuhrt (ed.), *Ministry Issues in the Church of England*, p. 223.

32 Kuhrt (ed.), *Ministry Issues in the Church of England*, p. 225.

33 Kuhrt (ed.), *Ministry Issues in the Church of England*, p. 226.

34 For the history behind this development see *Women Bishops in the Church of England?*, ch. 4.

35 Figures in Kuhrt (ed.), *Ministry Issues in the Church of England*, p. 236. By 2005 the number of women ordained in the Church of England had risen to 2,956 of whom 1,614 were stipendiary. www.cofe.anglican.org/statistics/churchstatistics

36 These figures are based on I. Jones, *Women and the Priesthood in the Church of England ten years on*, London, Church House Publishing, 2004. The 15–20% figure is supported both by surveys of the opinions of clergy and laity and by the percentage of parishes that have passed resolutions A or B or have petitioned for Extended Episcopal Ministry.

37 For the development of diaconal ministry see *Deacons in the Ministry of the Church* and *For Such a Time as This*.

38 The 2005 figure for the total number of Readers in active ministry in the Church of England was 10,188 as compared to 8,764 stipendiary clergy. www.cofe.anglican.org/info/statistics/churchstatistics, 2004.

39 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, p. 20.

40 See H. Unwin, 'Accredited lay workers', in Kuhrt (ed.), *Ministry Issues for the Church of England*, pp. 216–18.

41 Further details are available in the discussion paper, J. Cox, *Authorized Lay Pastoral Ministry*, 2002.

42 For details see www.evangelists.diocese-rochester.org

43 *The Church of England Year Book*, 2003, London, Church House Publishing, 2003, p. 279.

44 See the 2005 Ministry Division Paper, *Guidelines for the identification, training and development of Ordained Pioneer Ministers.*

45 *Mission-shaped Church*, GS 1523, Church House Publishing, 2004, p. 4.

46 *Mission-shaped Church*, pp. 5–6.

47 *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 9.

48 *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 10, quoting D. Lyon, 'Memory and the Millennium', in T. Bradshaw (ed.), *Grace and Truth in a Secular Age*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1998, p. 285.

49 *The Mystery of Salvation*, London, Church House Publishing, 1995, p. 34. For more detail about how changes in society have affected the Church see L. Barley, *Churchgoing Today*, London, Church House Publishing, 2006.

50 *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 11, quoting C. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, London, Routledge, 2000, pp. 193, 198.

51 D. MacLaren, *Mission Implausible*, Bletchley, Paternoster, 2004, pp. 77–8. A more pessimistic view of the evidence is taken by other scholars working in the field such as Robin Gill: see for example R. Gill, 'Measuring Church trends over time', in P. Avis (ed.), *Public Faith*, London, SPCK, 2003, pp. 24–6; but MacLaren argues persuasively that this more pessimistic assessment does not do justice to surveys such as the European Values Survey of 1999.

52 G. Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1994.

53 MacLaren, *Mission Implausible*, p. 78.

54 L. Barley, *Christian Roots, Contemporary Spirituality*, London, Church House Publishing, 2006. The whole book is an exploration of the idea put forward in the quotation.

55 G. Davie, 'From obligation to consumption: understanding the patterns of religion in northern Europe', in S. Croft (ed.), *The Parish System*, London, Church House Publishing, 2006.

56 Davie, 'From obligation to consumption'.

57 *Towards the Conversion of England*, London, Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 1945.

58 For a brief historical overview of the growth of this recognition see Paul Weston, 'Evangelism and renewal: an Anglican perspective', at www.margaretbeaufort.cam.ac.uk/research/weston.pdf

59 The attention given to Dan Brown's thriller *The Da Vinci Code*, or to the attacks on religion by the atheist scientist Richard Dawkins, for example, shows that there is still a need for Christian apologists to defend the historical veracity and intellectual coherence of the Christian message.

60 G. Tomlin, *The Provocative Church*, London, SPCK, 2002, pp. 68–9.

61 L. Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, London, SPCK, 1980, p. 227.

62 Tomlin, *The Provocative Church*, p. 170.

63 This is a point which has also been emphasized by the American theologian and ethicist Stanley Hauerwas. See, for instance, his book of collected essays, *Christian Existence Today*, Grand Rapids, Brazos Press, 2001.

64 M. Nazir-Ali, *Shapes of the Church to Come*, Eastbourne, Kingsway, 2001, p. 111.

65 Nazir-Ali, *Shapes of the Church to Come*, p. 111.

66 This is the implication, for instance, of the Declaration of Assent in Canon C 15.

67 See the ordination services in *The Book of Common Prayer* and *Common Worship* for this point. For its biblical basis see, for example, Matthew 16.18-20; Acts 20.28; Ephesians 4.11-13.

68 Barley, *Churchgoing Today*, p. 46.

69 *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 35.

70 *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 35.

71 *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 35.

72 *Commitment to Mission and Unity*, London, Church House Publishing / Peterborough, Methodist Publishing House, 1996, paragraph 43. See also the brief account of ecumenical thinking about the link between unity and mission in P. Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission*, London and New York, T&T Clark International, 2005, pp. 9–14.

Chapter 4

1 Mission Theological Advisory Group, *Presence and Prophecy: A Heart for Mission in Theological Education*, London, Church House Publishing and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, 2002.

2 Cf. The Second Vatican Council: by virtue of their royal priesthood, the laity fully participate in the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14, 30; W. M. Abbott, SJ (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, London and Dublin, Geoffrey Chapman, 1966, pp. 144, 148.

3 *Ad Gentes* 2, Abbott edn, p. 585.

4 On *missio dei* see D. J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 1991, pp. 389–93; S. B. Bevans and R. P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 2004, ch. 9. A classic text is G. Vicedom, *The Mission of God: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, ET St Louis, Concordia, 1965.

5 *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 367 (2003), p. 464.

6 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 391.

7 J. Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, London, SCM Press, 1991, p. 11.

8 A. Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, London, SCM Press, 1953, p. 291.

9 On the Great Commission see A. Le Grys, *Preaching to the Nations: The Origins of Mission in the Early Church*, London, SPCK, 1998; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, ch. 2 (Bosch rightly points out that these verses have to be interpreted against the background of Matthew's Gospel as a whole); W. S. Gunter and E. Robinson, *Considering the Great Commission: Evangelism and Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2005. See also W. J. Larkin Jr and J. F. Williams (eds), *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 1998; R. G. Harris, *Mission in the Gospels*, Peterborough, Epworth Press, 2004. There are useful perspectives in V. Samuel and C. Sugden (eds), *Mission as Transformation*, Oxford, Regnum, 1999.

10 This is an ancient theme that was developed by John Calvin and applied systematically for the first time to the Church by John Henry Newman. See further Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission*, pp. 65–9; and P. Avis, *Beyond the Reformation? Authority, Primacy and Unity in the Conciliar Tradition*, London and New York, T&T Clark International, 2006, pp. 9–12.

11 On the mission and ministry of the laity some foundational texts are: Y. M. J. Congar, *Lay People in the Church: A Study for the Theology of the Laity*, trans. D. Attwater, Westminster, MD, Newman Press, 1975; K. Rahner, 'Notes on the Lay Apostolate' in *Theological Investigations*, 2, London, Darton, Longman & Todd / New York, Seabury Press, 1963, pp. 318–52; The Second Vatican Council, 'Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People', *Apostolicam Actuositatem*: 'the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetical and kingly office of Christ; they have therefore, in the Church and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole people of God' (A. Flannery, *Vatican Council II, 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, new revised edn, New York, Costello Publishing Co. / Dublin, Dominican Publications, 1998, p. 768; cf. *Lumen Gentium*, IV, esp. 33).

12 The Porvoo Common Statement, *Together in Mission and Unity*, London, Church House Publishing, 1993, paragraph 32(f), broadly following the Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelische Kirche in Deutchsland: *The Meissen Agreement*, London, Council for Christian Unity, 1992, paragraph 16(vii).

13 Porvoo, paragraph 32(k); following Meissen paragraph 15(x).

14 *Lumen Gentium*, 9, Abbott edn, p. 26.

15 Cf. W. Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, New York, Herder and Herder, Crossroad, 2003, p. 17.

16 Kasper, *Leadership in the Church,* p. 17.

17 See, for an extended exposition of this perspective, John Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist during the First Three Centuries*, 2nd edn, trans. E. Theokritoff, Brookline, MA, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001.

18 See 'Suffragan Bishops' (A House of Bishops Occasional Paper, GS Misc 733), Church House, London, 2004.

19 See notably C. Gore, *The Church and the Ministry*, 2nd edn, London, Longmans, 1889.

20 See further P. Avis, *A Church Drawing Near: Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture* London and New York, T&T Clark, 2003.

21 See further *For Such a Time as This*, pp. 53–60, for the range of tasks of a deacon. D. Clark, *Breaking the Mould of Christendom: Kingdom Community, Diaconal Church and the Liberation of the Laity*, Peterborough, Epworth Press, 2005, sees 'the primary task of the deacon' as challenging and equipping lay people to fulfil their calling as 'messengers of the kingdom community' (p. 115) and as 'community educators' (p. 282).

22 On the role and ministry of lay people see R. P. Stevens, *The Abolition of the Laity: Vocation, Work and Ministry in a Biblical Perspective*, Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1999. Stevens' interpretation of the term 'ministry' is pre-Collins and simply equated it with service. C. Bulley, *The Priesthood of Some Believers: Developments from the General to the Special Priesthood in the Christian Literature of the First Three Centuries*, Carlisle, Paternoster, 2000, is an exhaustive historical survey with an animus against ordination in any ontological sense.

Chapter 5

1 See the House of Bishops statement *Eucharistic Presidency* and the Interim Report of the Joint Implementation Commission under the Anglican–Methodist Covenant *In the Spirit of the Covenant*, Peterborough, Methodist Publishing House, 2005.

2 See Paula Gooder, '*Diakonia* in the New Testament: A Dialogue with John N. Collins', *Ecclesiology* 3, no. 1, 2006, pp. 33–56. For Collins' most recent statement of his views see John N. Collins, 'Ordained and Other Ministries' in the same issue, pp. 11–32.